

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

J

LA BELLE HÉLÈNE DE CONSTANTINOPLE:
THE TEXT OF THE FEMALE BODY
IN A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CHANSON DE GESTE

by

VALENTINA JONES-WAGNER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

2001

UMI Number: 3024804

Copyright 2001 by
Jones-Wagner, Valentina Aimee

All rights reserved.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3024804

Copyright 2001 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2001

VALENTINA JONES-WAGNER

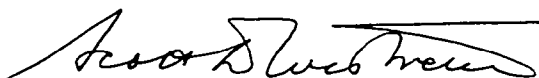
All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate
Faculty in Comparative

Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement
for the degree of Doctor of

Philosophy.

Date



Professor Scott D. Westrem
Chair of Examining Committee

Date



Professor William Coleman
Executive Officer

Professor Catherine McKenna
Professor Pamela Sheingorn
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF New York

Abstract

LA BELLE HÉLÈNE DE CONSTANTINOPLE:
THE TEXT OF THE FEMALE BODY
IN A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CHANSON DE GESTE

by

Valentina Jones-Wagner

Adviser: Professor Scott D. Westrem

This thesis analyzes a late medieval text, focusing on the image of the female body. La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, a fourteenth-century chanson de geste, equates sexual pollution with religious pollution when it identifies incest with paganism and calls to mind the anthropological theory Mary Douglas. She sees the body as a symbolic stand-in for its community, which means that threats to the body are threats to the community, and its purification cleanses the community.

In La Belle Hélène, the body under attack is the female body exposed to incest, mutilation, deprivation and,

finally, made whole through miraculous healing. Woman is cast in the role of the victim and has to keep her body pure to guard the integrity of her "community." The poem emphasizes the provenance of the Roman pope; and the image of incest is used twice: it represents the threat from the Saracens as well as the schism between the Eastern and the Western churches.

Saracen men either convert to become Christian heroes (or hermits), or they remain pagan brutes to be exterminated. Saracen princesses secretly long to be baptized, fall in love with Christian knights, and, as Christian wives, contribute to the strengthening of Western secular and religious leadership. The whiteness of their skin signals their allegiance to the "true" faith, and their promiscuity makes the enemy lines permeable, literally and figuratively.

Through most of the epic, the female protagonist is portrayed as persecuted and suffering, until she is glorified in her miraculous healing. This is in accordance with Christian theology, which advocates physical suffering as spiritually purifying. Hélène's healing stands for the

healing of Western Christianity: Rome has become reunited with Jerusalem and reconciled with Constantinople. When her community is safe and her body is healed, HÉLÈNE's mission is complete and she soon dies. Her story and history are left in the hands of the Roman pope and her offspring, Saint Martin and Saint Brice, pillars of saintly patriarchy.

Acknowledgements

Over the years of writing this thesis I have received support from several individuals and institutions. I am grateful to Martin Stevens for an inspirational introduction to the Middle Ages, and to Amy Mandelker and Fred Nichols for their support during my first years of studies at the CUNY Graduate Center. Francesca Sautman first made me acquainted with La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, and Nancy Black gave me a chance to present a first paper on the subject to the Medieval Club in New York City. Nadia Margolis invited Hélène into her *Encyclopedia of Women in the Middle Ages*, and Sheila Delany encouraged me to expose my thoughts on the Saracen princess at a conference. Amy Golahny provided a forum for doing so, and Robin Knauth and her family opened their home when I visited Lycoming College.

My dissertation committee remained available for questions even as I moved from one coast of the US to the other. Pamela Sheingorn provided valuable help with the bibliography, and Catherine McKenna encouraged further exploration of the medieval church and its doctrine.

My adviser, Scott Westrem, directed this thesis even when engaged in stressful teaching assignments in Paris. He provided thoughtful advice when my own boat appeared rudderless, and corrected my drafts with exemplary diligence. I owe him unending thanks and gratitude for his critique and guidance.

I received generous "technical" support from San Diego State University, who provided me with access to inter-library-loan, without which this thesis could not have been written. My thanks go especially to Kathleen Jones, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, as well as to Susan Cayleff, head of the Department of Women's Studies, and Teddy Brock, her assistant.

Darcy Bingham generously introduced me to her contacts at UCSD and became one of my first friends in San Diego. Dr. Otto Mower read one of the early drafts and provided helpful feedback when I felt academically somewhat isolated after moving away from New York.

Life in transition was made easier by Barbara Pospisil, who always provided succinct and immediate advice when needed, and who steered me through the rough waters of administrative regulations and dead lines.

I thank Andrew for ongoing help with a number of computer glitches, and Katarina for her cheerful encouragement and understanding, even when I was too busy to drive her. I will always be grateful to Michael for his financial as well as moral support and for stimulating discussions in both our fields.

Table of Contents

La Belle Hélène de Constantinople: The Text of the Female Body in a 14th-century chanson de geste

I	Introduction	1
	A. Methodological Approach	1
	B. History and Summary of the Text	8
	1. The Manuscripts	8
	2. The Plot	11
	3. <u>La Belle Hélène</u> and the Epic Tradition	22
II	Folklore and Analogues	26
	A. Folklore Motifs	26
	B. Analogues	31
	C. Summaries of Five Analogues	35
	1. <u>Vitae Duorum Offarum</u>	35
	2. <u>La Manekine</u>	39
	3. <u>Mai und Beaflo</u>	45
	4. <u>Emare</u>	50
	5. <u>The Life of Constance</u>	56
	a. Nicholas Trivet	56
	b. John Gower	63
	c. Geoffrey Chaucer	68
	6. Comparative Summary	72
	a. Idiosyncrasies of <u>La Belle Hélène</u>	72
	b. Meaning of Names and Places	74
	c. Role of Religion and Saracens	77
III	The Body as Theoretical Framework	79
	A. Anthropology and the Symbolic Use of the Body	79
	B. Gender Theory and the Female as Image	85
	C. Theology and the Body in the Late Middle Ages	95
	1. The Body of Christ	95
	2. The Female Body	99
	3. Conclusion	108

IV	<u>La Belle Hélène, Text and Context</u>	110
	A. Clement and Henry	110
	B. Clovis and Saint Martin	113
	C. Constantinople, Tours, and Rome	116
V	The Text of the Female Body	121
	A. Pollution of the Body	121
	B. Mutilation of the Body	129
	C. Deprivation of the Body	132
	D. Restoration of the Body	137
	E. The Body of the Other	139
VI	Conclusion	153
VII	Appendix	160
VIII	Works Cited	164

Abbreviations

- JMEMS** Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies.
- MFN** Medieval Feminist Newsletter, since 1999 published
under the name Medieval Feminist Forum.
- MLA** Modern Language Association.
- SATF** Société d'Anciens Textes Français.

LA BELLE HÉLÈNE DE CONSTANTINOPLE:

The Text of the Female Body in a Fourteenth-Century Chanson de Geste

I. Introduction

A. Methodological Approach

This thesis focuses on the image of the female body in La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, a fourteenth-century French chanson de geste. My analysis is based on the edition of the oldest manuscript known, Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 766, dated 1471, which purports to be a copy from a manuscript written in 1407.¹ It forms part of a story cycle of the "Falsely Accused Queen" and centers on the folk motif of the "Maiden without Hands," popular all over Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²

La Belle Hélène de Constantinople portrays the undeserved suffering of a young Christian queen during the time of the crusades. The life of the heroine is marked by threats of incest and rape, by mutilation, exile and deprivation, and, finally, by

¹ La Belle Hélène de Constantinople: Chanson de geste du XIVe siècle, crit. ed. Claude Roussel (Geneva: Droz, 1995).

² For the cycle of the Accused Queen see Margaret Schlauch, Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens (1927; new ed. New York: Gordian, 1969). The basic structure of the motif of the Maiden without Hands is outlined in Antti Aarne, The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography, trans. and enlarged by Stith Thompson (1928; New York: Lenox Hill, 1971) 111. For the diffusion of the motif in West- and East Europe see Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka, Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913-32) vol 1, 295-311.

miraculous healing. It is a story of "violence and miracle,"³ which illustrates how the hardship of physical persecution can be overcome through faith in God, and justice achieved through miracles. Set within the framework of the crusades, miracles attesting to the "true" Christian faith take on a culturally charged meaning and, as I will show, so do descriptions of physical violation, mutilation, deprivation, and healing. I intend to analyze them by interpreting the female body in the text as a symbolic representative of physical as well as cultural persecution and survival.

The theoretical framework of this thesis derives from the insights of Cultural Anthropology, especially the work of Mary Douglas.⁴ She examines the role of the body in pollution taboos and purification rituals. On the one hand, the body can serve as a stand-in for society in such rituals. On the other hand, any fears a society (or its leaders) might have about disturbances of its internal order can be expressed in the form of physical pollution taboos. The body can, thus, function as an emblem for its community and invite a cultural reading of its treatment.

Douglas's observations are complemented by considerations

³ This juxtaposition is derived from Michael Goodich, Violence and Miracle in the Fourteenth Century: Private Grief and Public Salvation (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), which demonstrates for the fourteenth century "that the appeal to the supernatural could serve at the same time as an effective means of social control"; 2.

⁴ Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (1966; repr. New York: Routledge, 1996), and Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

from Gender Studies, which inquire into the role assigned to sex and gender in and by society.⁵ This allows me to concentrate specifically on the "femaleness" of the heroine's body, the role it plays in the poem, and the message it carries for its readers.

Both Cultural Anthropology and Gender Studies have influenced literary theory. New Historicists regard all texts, not only literature, as having the potential to inform about society, and they read them as expressions of fears, hopes, and ambitions of various social groups.⁶ New Historicism probes mainly into Renaissance texts and, in response, a "New Medievalism" has developed, which applies a cultural reading specifically to the Middle Ages.⁷ Feminists have pointed out

⁵ See III B.

⁶ For the history and methodology of New Historicism, including its attention to the body, see Catherine Gallagher and Steven Greenblatt, Practicing New Historicism (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000). In France, the Annales School also developed a new historiography, which reached out to anthropology and investigated the influence of folk elements; see the work of Jacques Le Goff cited later on. For an overview of Annales members and their work see Aaron Gurevich, Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages, ed. Jana Howlett (Chicago, U of Chicago P, 1992), 21-31.

An earlier socio-historic approach, criticized for being overly materialist, can be found in Erich Koehler, Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der hoefischen Epik (1956; rev. ed. Tuebingen: Niemeyer, 1970). Koehler interprets Chrétien de Troyes' romances as the result of socio-economic changes (and the concomitant fears and desires of the lower aristocracy) in twelfth century in France.

⁷ Marguerite Waller, "The Empire's New Clothes: Refashioning the Renaissance," in Fisher and Halley, 160-183 criticizes New Historicism from a feminist viewpoint. Echoing some of Waller's concerns, Stephen Nichols calls for a "New Medievalism," less focused on authority and self-representation, but predisposed "to interrogate and reformulate assumptions about the discipline of medieval studies..."; see his introduction to "The New Medievalism: Tradition and Discontinuity in Medieval Culture," in The New Medievalism, eds. Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) 1-26, quote on 1.

that in medieval fiction the fears, hopes, and desires expressed were more frequently those of men rather than of women, and consequently "scholars began to read 'woman' in the text as a textual sign rather than a historical entity."⁸

I examine La Belle Hélène de Constantinople for its depiction of the relationships among societal groupings, specifically those delineated by gender and race.⁹ This means analyzing the body of the Christian and, in the context of the crusades, also that of the non-Christian female. Feminist Theory has helped to shape questions about the marginalization not only of women, but of other groups as well, which has linked this approach to those developed in the fields of Cultural Studies and Postcolonialism.¹⁰ It is thus a fitting tool to complement

⁸ The construction of woman as textual sign is discussed in E. Jane Burns, Sarah Kay, Roberta Krueger, and Helen Solterer, "Feminism and the Discipline of Old French Studies: *Une Belle Disjointure*," in Medievalism and the Modernist Temper, eds. Howard Bloch and Stephen Nichols, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1966) 225-66, quote on 230. For the influence of male authors and their homo-social discourse on the depiction of women see, for example, Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley, Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings: Essays in Feminist Contextual Criticism (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1989). This is not to say that there were no women writers, see III B.

⁹ Class distinctions play less of a role in this poem, as all main protagonists come from the nobility, and people from "lower" classes are generally well disposed towards their aristocratic masters. It is, however, interesting that the people in some versions speak out and take action against their king when they think that he ordered the execution of their beloved queen, see II C 3 and C 4.

¹⁰ "What we here have been calling female aesthetics turns out to be a specialized name for any practices available to those groups - nations, genders, sexualities, races, classes - all social practices which wish to criticize, to differentiate from, to overturn the dominant forms of knowing and understanding with which they are saturated"; Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "For the Etruscans," in The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, Theory, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon,

Cultural Anthropology in reviewing the treatment of the body of the "Other," in this case the bodies of Saracen princesses, whose tales form important subplots to the story of Hélène.

Interpreting the physical imagery of the female body as culturally charged symbol, I investigate its significance not only within the text but also in the socio-political context of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the time of the text's origin and of its greatest popularity.¹¹ Since La Belle Hélène de Constantinople is replete with repetitions, miracles, and anachronisms that border on the absurd,¹² the poem appears at first to be an expression of the much-discussed "alterity" of the Middle Ages.¹³ Such "otherness" has in the past invited scholars to compress the Middle Ages into some homogenized "Dark Ages,"

1985) 271-91, quote on 285.

¹¹ For the importance of the reader and his/her own cultural horizon see Hans Robert Jauss, Toward an Aesthetic of Reception, trans. Timothy Bakhti, (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester, 1982).

¹² See Alexander H. Krappe, "La Belle Hélène de Constantinople," Romania 63 (1927): 324-53.

¹³ Stephen Nichols, Lee Patterson, Gabrielle Spiegel, and others are involved in the discussion of new approaches to the study of medievalist texts, which would allow to recognize their "otherness", while also allowing for the "modernity" of their concerns; see their contributions to Stephen Nichols, ed. "The New Philology," Speculum 65 (1990). Allen Frantzen, Speaking Two Languages (Albany, New York: SUNY UP, 1991) advocates interdisciplinary cooperation and the incorporation of new theoretical approaches. The role and treatment of minority groups and changes in their portrayal are discussed in John Van Engen, ed., The Past and Future of Medieval Studies (Notre Dame and London: U of Notre Dame P, 1994). Michael Bentley, ed. Companion to Historiography (London and New York: Routledge 1997) traces the influence of historians' ideology on their writing, as does Kathleen Biddick, The Shock of Medievalism (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1998). Biddick looks at political events during the time of research in order to uncover how they influenced medievalists, besides pointing to the socio-political interests of medieval writers themselves.

and to see in that period the infancy of our civilization, similar to the way Third World countries are perceived to be at the early (and thus "primitive") stage of (our "more advanced") development.¹⁴

Two qualities of La Belle Hélène de Constantinople give the work a keen sense of "alterity": first, the anachronistic narrative setting of the poem, which juxtaposes events from the first and fifth centuries with the crusades; and second, its strong hagiographical emphasis.¹⁵ I will show that the anachronisms, rather than being flaws from an "underdeveloped age", actually buttress the ideological implications in the text. The same is true for the hagiographic elements, since even saints' lives and miracles express the ideological interests of their authors.¹⁶ Recent research on hagiography does in fact show that "there can be no simple definition of 'hagiography' or of historiography that does not conscientiously take into account

¹⁴ For a critical discussion of this concept see John Dagenais and Margaret R. Greer, eds. "Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction," Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 30 (2000): 431-62, quote on 431. For the use of Postcolonial Theory in reading the Middle Ages see also Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., The Postcolonial Middle Ages. New York: St. Martin's P, 2000. The influence of the medievalist own ideology on his research is also discussed by Jacques Le Goff, Pour un autre Moyen Age: temps, travail et culture en Occident (Paris: Gallimard, 1977); see his Preface 7-15, and "Le Moyen Age de Michelet," 19-45.

¹⁵ For the (humanist) reluctance to treat hagiography as history and for the possibilities to do so see Paul Fouracre, "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography," Past and Present 127 (1990): 3-38.

¹⁶ This is clearly borne out in the "socio-semiotic" reading of hagiography by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999).

changing political contexts."¹⁷ An approach which accepts that not only the writing of history, but also the writing of saints' lives is informed by political circumstances leads to the discovery that while life in the Middle Ages was different, the pursuit of political positioning then was not entirely alien to that in our own times now.

After the identification of extant manuscripts and a summary of the plot, I review some of the poem's folkloric motifs, and then compare La Belle Hélène de Constantinople to a number of analogues in order to differentiate between typical and atypical features in the poem. For methodology I first present an outline of Douglas's theory of the body with its implications for pollution and purification. Following that, Gender Studies help to inquire more specifically into the "femaleness" of the body and its signification in the text and the society it presents. Subsequently, in order to ensure the compatibility between modern theory and the Christian framework of the medieval poem, I investigate the role of the body and the semiotics of its purity and pollution in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century theology. This allows me to analyze the poem's textual imagery of the female body in the light of both modern theory and medieval tradition. My goal is to show how an interdisciplinary approach to a medieval text can open it up for modern readers without violating the historical grounding of the text.

¹⁷ Felice Lipshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," Viator 25 (1994): 95-113, quote on 97.

B. History and Summary of the Text

1. The Manuscripts

The central text for this thesis is La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, a French chanson de geste from the fourteenth century that, like other chansons of this time, combines elements of epic, romance, and hagiography. The story is known in a variety of forms: it circulated in poetry and in prose, as well as in the context of various other works. There are seven complete texts in medieval French manuscripts known today: three of them are in verse and four are in prose.¹⁸

Manuscripts in Verse

A. Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 766 (previously 742).

Dated 1471 and presented as the copy of a text from 1401, the earliest date ascertained for the text. The manuscript contains three different stories:

- La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, folio 2r - 199v, approximately 15,500 alexandrines.
- La vie de Saint Alexis, folio 200r - 208r.

¹⁸ In addition, there exists one fifteenth-century fragment of 126 alexandrines on two pages, Oxford, Bodleian Library, recueil Douce 381. It was identified as part of the story of La Belle Hélène de Constantinople and published by Hermann Suchier under the title Le siège de Castres in Romanische Studien 1 (1875): 589-93. For the affiliation of the manuscripts see P. Verhuyck, "Les Manuscrits du Poème de 'La Belle Hélène de Constantinople'," Studi francesi 47 (1972): 314-24. For an overview article on the subject of La Belle Hélène see Marie-Claude de Crécy "La Belle Hélène de Constantinople", Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises, "Le Moyen Age," rev, ed., eds. Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink (1964; Paris: Livres de Poche, 1992) 137-38.

- Le Trespas de Notre Dame, folio 209r - 233r (this title was added by a later hand).

- L. Lyons, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 767 (previously 685).
1446-1469. 13,000-14,000 alexandrines. The scribe seems to have either known Arras 766 or a similar but lost version of the text.
- P. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS f. fr. 12482.
15th century. It contains approximately 13,000 alexandrines and appears to be a copy either of a precursor of the L manuscript, or of a similar text.

The oldest form in verse available today, then, seems to be the copy from Arras. Very similar, though with some notable modifications, is the text from Lyons, which in turn appears to have been copied by the scribe of the Paris manuscript. The copyist's name is given only in the Arras manuscript; the others are unattributed.¹⁹

Manuscripts in Prose

There are two different versions in prose, one of which follows the text in the three verse manuscripts closely:

- Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale MS 9967, written by Jean Wauquelin for Philip, Duke of Burgundy, in 1448 with beautiful

¹⁹ At the end of the Arras manuscript we find "Escrip̄t par Jennette Greberd, le Xe jour de march, an lxxj avant Pasques," which might indicate a female copyist, although the name "Jennette" alone does not provide sufficient evidence; see Roussel La Belle H  l  ne 30.

illuminations.²⁰

The second version resembles the verse forms less closely; names are different and some episodes are omitted, others shortened. Still, these stories follow essentially the same outline as the other texts. There are three extant manuscripts with prose texts of this type, all quite similar to each other:

1. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS f. fr. 1489 from the fifteenth century in 55 folia. This text starts with 21 alexandrines and then continues mainly in prose.
2. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. fr. 20592. This luxury edition from the fifteenth century with illuminated initials consists of 95 folia; the text is almost identical to that in the manuscript above.
3. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS f. fr. 19167 from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, 303 folia. This manuscripts also contains other stories, influenced by folktales:
 - Le roman de la Belle Hélène starts after 9 blank pages with the equivalent of folio 5v of Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS f. fr. 1489. It ends on folio 104.
 - Le roman de Mélusine.

²⁰ See J. Van den Gheyn, L'Ystoire de Helayne, Reproduction des 26 Miniatures (Brussels: Vromant, 1913). A translation has appeared by Marie-Claude de Crécy in Splendeurs de la Cour de Bourgogne, ed. Danielle Bohler-Régnier (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1995). For the text's political value see Nancy B. Black, "La Belle Hélène de Constantinople and Crusade Propaganda at the Court of Philip the Good," in Fifteenth-Century Studies 26 (2001): 42-51.

- Le roman de Pierre de Provence et la Belle Maguelonne.
- A small piece in verse on folio 303.

Numerous prose tales were later derived from this second branch of prose manuscripts of La Belle Hélène de Constantinople and circulated in the form of "livres bleus," books printed for popular entertainment. They appeared mainly during the late fifteenth century, though the tale remained popular well into the seventeenth century.²¹

In this thesis I have chosen to analyze the oldest and most complete French version of La Belle Hélène de Constantinople known today, the Arras manuscript, whose nearly 15,500 alexandrines are divided into 399 laisses of uneven length, each characterized by its own end-rhyme. All citations from the poem are from Claude Roussel's 1995 edition, which documents variants in the two other complete verse manuscripts.²² Translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

2. The Plot

In the Arras manuscript, the story of La Belle Hélène de

²¹ For summaries of the popular versions see Charles Nisard, Histoire des livres populaires, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Amyot, 1854), which gives the first half of the story, and Paul Brochon, Le livre de colportage en France depuis le XVIe siècle (Paris: Gruend, 1954) for the entire tale.

²² For an earlier investigation and comparison of several of the extant manuscripts see Rudolf Ruths, Die franzoesischen Fassungen des Roman de la Belle Hélène (Greifswald: Kunique, 1897). A summary of the poem in modern French, as well as reference to the tale's popularity in West and East, can be found in Krappe.

Constantinople (henceforth La Belle Hélène) is set in some undefined period of the Middle Ages and tells the story of Hélène, daughter of a legendary King Antoine of Constantinople. Her mother, a niece of the Roman Pope Clement and a daughter of the Roman emperor, was given in marriage to Antoine as reward for his bravery against the Saracens.²³ She dies in childbirth and the girl is named after Saint Helena, the mother of Constantine, who was renowned for having found the cross of Christ in the early fourth century (18-102).

King Antoine raises his daughter affectionately; he has several portraits of her painted in his room and lets her sleep in his bed. When the girl is 13 years old, he falls obsessively in love with her. At that time Rome is again threatened by the Saracens and Antoine offers to help Clement in return for papal dispensation to marry Hélène. The pope reluctantly agrees after an angel has assured him that the marriage will not be consummated (103-346). When Antoine arrives in Rome, he has Hélène's portrait painted on all the pillars of the papal palace before his army successfully wards off the Saracens again. The king returns home to marry his daughter (347-783).

²³ Though also referred to as "Turks" or "Persans," the non-Christians in this poem are frequently named "Saracens," regardless of geographic location. There are "Saracens" in Jerusalem as well as in Bavaria and Scotland. This kind of generic use of the term as well as the description of Mohammed as god rather than prophet occurs also in English literature, where e.g. "Layamon, a Christian monk writing in the twelfth century... has the Saxons worshipping 'maumets'"; see Dorothee Metlitzki, The Matter of Araby in Medieval England (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 119.

Hélène, terrified, escapes by boat before the incestuous marriage can take place, and Antoine has her nurse burned for helping the girl escape. He leaves Constantinople in search of his daughter. Hélène finds refuge in a Christian convent in otherwise pagan Flanders, where the church bells miraculously begin to toll at her approach. Soon, though, she embarks again in order to escape the amorous designs of the Saracen King of Flanders. Her vessel is attacked by pirates, who take Hélène on board. When the captain wants to rape her, Hélène's prayers to the Virgin Mary evoke a big storm. The ship is wrecked; only Hélène survives and is stranded on the coast of England, where young king Henry finds her in a garden near a fountain. Although she does not divulge her lineage, he eventually marries her, against the opposition of his mother Marguerite, who unsuccessfully tries to chase her daughter-in-law from court (784-1460).

Not long after Hélène's wedding, the Saracens attack Rome again and, since her father is nowhere to be found, her husband is called from England in order to assist the Pope (1461-1692). Henry puts the Earl of Gloucester in charge of the realm and hands Hélène, who is expecting to give birth, a copy of the royal seal to ensure the confidentiality of their messages. His mother now befriends Hélène in order to gain access to her seal, of which she secretly has a second copy made. When Hélène gives birth to twins, Marguerite retrieves Hélène's letter, which joyfully announces the event, and substitutes for it one of her

own, relating the birth of two monsters. Then she suppresses Henry's response, in which he instructs his advisers to keep mother and offspring safe until his return, and instead sends fake orders to have them all burned. Gloucester resists until he has received eight more such forged missives.²⁴ He then publicly has H el ene's right arm cut off, ostensibly to serve as proof of her demise. While he is still wondering how to save her, his niece Marie, whose death by fire had been prophesied at her birth, volunteers to die in H el ene's stead. After her right arm is amputated, she is burned together with two puppets impersonating the infant twins. Gloucester keeps Marie's arm and attaches that of H el ene to one of the twins before casting the three out to sea in a rudderless boat (1461-3501).

They are stranded on the island of Constance and, while the exhausted mother falls asleep, the children are abducted; one by a wolf and the other by a lion.²⁵ H el ene, believing them dead, departs in despair on a merchant vessel bound for France (3502-3699). The boys are discovered and raised by a hermit who names one Lion, after the lion who abducted him, and the other Brac, after the arm (bras) he always carries with him (3700-75).

Meanwhile in Rome the one-hundred-year old pope leads the troops into battle and after much fighting Henry is able to kill

²⁴ The text emphasizes an allegorical reading by relating the nine messages to the nine months that Mary carried Christ in her womb, 4753-60.

²⁵ According to the poem, the island has since been called Scotland, 3605-06.

Butor, the king of the Turks, whose soul is immediately claimed by a number of devils.²⁶ His death causes the Saracens to withdraw. Henry adopts Butor's crest, the three leopards, which have graced English arms ever since (3776-4233).

In the search for his daughter, Antoine arrives in Bavaria. At this point the themes of incest and idolatry are addressed a second time. Antoine the sinner is now ascribed the role of healer: he cures the Bavarian king, Graibaut, from the incestuous desire for his daughter Clariande, and he does so through a kind of exorcism ceremony: he destroys a fiendish pagan idol and exorcizes the pagan spirit from Graibaut, who retires as a hermit and leaves the realm to his daughter (4234-4581).

Antoine then continues his search and arrives at the monastery in Flanders where H el ene had first found refuge. The abbess tells him of the miraculous ringing of the bells and reports that H el ene has left by sea to escape the advances of the Flemish king. Antoine, repenting, vows to search for her until he finds her, dead or alive (4582-4656).

Henry returns to England and is desolate to find his wife gone. Soon afterward, Antoine arrives, asking after his daughter, and the men discover that they are in-laws. Gloucester tells them that he burnt H el ene according to the orders he had

²⁶ Such figurative language is standard fare in the chansons de geste. The poem also reports that black smoke emanates from the mouth of a mortally wounded giant and then turns into 500 blackbirds, actually embodying devils, 14120-32. This kind of iconography can also be found in illustrations. See Suzanne Lewis, The Art of Matthew Paris in the *Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: U of California P), which depicts the head of the dying Saladin with a blackbird escaping from his mouth on 272.

received, and the two kings deplore the cruel misunderstanding. After a while, though, they uncover the plot hatched by Henry's mother and set a trap for her. Antoine pretends to propose marriage to Marguerite, extracts the false seal from her, and also finds out that she plans to poison her son in order to become queen. He warns Henry, who, after one of the messengers confesses to having carried Marguerite's false letters, has his mother burnt (4657-5330). Pressed for proof of his story, Gloucester first shows them the arm of his niece and, when they recognize that it is not H  l  ne's arm, confesses that he let her escape. Relieved, Henry and his father-in-law set out to search for her. They are joined by king Amaury of Scotland, who has been exiled by his subjects because of his conversion to Christianity (5331-5479).

When the twins reach the age of sixteen, they leave the island to find their mother. In their travels Lion shares his coat with a beggar who turns out to be a disguised image of Christ; this is the first indication that the young boy is the future Saint Martin (5480-6392).²⁷ They arrive at the Bavarian court, where they are well received by Clariande. Lion is put in charge of provisions and miraculously multiplies food for the

²⁷ For the Vita of Saint Martin see Sulpicius Severus, "The Life of Saint Martin of Tours," trans. F. R. Hoare, in Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995) 1-29. Clare Stancliffe provides cultural commentary in Saint Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus (Oxford, UK: Clarendon P, 1983).

poor, but eventually has to escape the advances of Clariande, who, although recently married to the Earl of Gloucester, is attracted to him. In France the brothers meet the archbishop of Tours, whose name is Martin, and he baptizes them to the names Martin and Brice (6393-6495). They distribute alms to the poor, among them to a woman who has only one arm, but they don't recognize her as their mother. Antoine and Henry conquer the city of Bordeaux, which will henceforth remain in English hands. Its king receives the name Coustant in baptism and continues with them on their search for H el ene, during which they fight numerous battles and convert many Saracens (6496-7428).

When the kings and their allies march into Tours, H el ene goes into hiding out of fear of her father and her husband. The men meet the twins, however, and recognize H el ene's arm, which Brice continues to carry. Henry, Antoine, Amaury, and Coustant start out to conquer Jerusalem from the infidel, while Martin remains with the archbishop in Tours, and Brice sets out for England. Originally he had wanted to avenge his mother's death, but he is dissuaded by his relatives and goes with peaceful intentions instead. In London, he asks for the three royal seals to be transformed into a crucifix, but, miraculously, Marguerite's forgery will not mix with the two true editions, which in turn yield more metal than they were made out of. The crucifix is said to be to this day in St. Paul's Cathedral and to have worked several miracles (7429-8688).

The battle for Jerusalem is fierce and Coustant is taken

captive, but the daughter of the king of Jerusalem, Plaisance, who is married to one of her father's allies, falls in love with him. When her husband discovers them together, Coustant kills him and, in danger of his life, is spirited back into the Christian camp through the intervention of Saint George. The saint prophesies that both Plaisance and H  l  ne will be found after the conquest of Jerusalem, of Castres (a city in "Lombardie", i.e. Italy), and of Flanders.²⁸ Plaisance, who is pregnant with Coustant's child, flees the city and finds shelter with a senator and his wife in Rome, where she is baptized.²⁹ The senator falls in love with her, poisons his wife, and orders a cousin of his to kill Plaisance's infant son. He then accuses the child's nurse of the boy's death and has her executed (8689-9333).

Before he can carry out the dismal order, the cousin is ambushed by thieves, who take the child and then abandon it in a forest near Castres. The French king Clovis is besieging the city but the Saracens seem poised to defeat the Franks. The poem then tells the legend of how Clovis, whose wife was already Christian, promised to convert as well if he were victorious in battle. In reply, an angel changes his insignia from three golden toads to three golden lilies, henceforth the crest of the kings of France. In the poem, he does not achieve final victory,

²⁸ The prophecy occurs in ll. 9112-20.

²⁹ The boy is called Joseran and will become the future companion of Floovant, son of the French king Clovis, a reference to the *chanson de geste* of Floovant, see I B 3.

but he chases the enemy back into their city and obtains a truce. He returns to France and is baptized, keeping his name (9334-9657).

Meanwhile, when the senator makes advances to the grieving Plaisance he is, miraculously, paralyzed. She flees to the city of Castres mourning for her son, and also for Constant, whom she believes dead, but who is still fighting in the Holy Land. The battle for Jerusalem is protracted and the city is finally taken when Amaury (the converted Scottish king) has himself hoisted over the walls on the tips of his mens' spears and unfolds the English banner from the highest tower.³⁰ Defeated, the king of Jerusalem converts, and becomes a worthy ally (9658-10259).

Hélène earns her living as washerwoman and has to fight off the advances of various beggars. When rumor reaches her that Henry has died, she mourns for him and sets out for Rome to meet Pope Clement. On the way she falls ill at Castres and is cared for by Plaisance, who has meanwhile opened a hostel for pilgrims. After three months she is restored and the heathen king Hurtaut is so taken with her beauty that he orders her brought to court. She escapes to Rome, where she remains incognito and, when the pope asks her if she has met his niece, she pretends that she has seen Hélène at Tours. In memory of his relative, Clement invites her to live in the papal palace, but she prefers to camp out

³⁰ This feat echoes that of Thomas of Marle; see La Conquête de Jérusalem. Originally edited by Célestin Hippeau (Paris, 1868), it has been re-edited under the title La Chanson de Jérusalem, ed. Nigel Thorp (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1992); see *laisse* 138.

under its stairs, surviving on charity (10260-736).

After the victory over Jerusalem, which constitutes the centerpiece of the poem, Constant takes his leave to search for Plaisance. He confronts the evil senator and finds out that his son is still alive (10737-11040). In the meantime, H el ene has heard that Henry is on his way to Rome. Delighted that he is not dead but still afraid of him, she returns to Tours. This time she leaves a letter behind revealing her identity and announcing that with God's will she will continue to escape (11041-790).

After the battle of Jerusalem, the kings conquer Acre and plan to deliver Mecca. At that point a messenger arrives from the pope, seeking help against Hurtaut and his Saracens, who have started slaughtering the Christians in Castres. Amaury attempts an assault on the city, but is taken captive. Unwilling to abjure his faith, he is crucified and, like Christ, stabbed in his side with a lance. His blood turns those whom it touches into madmen who begin to kill each other, reducing the number of enemies. The Christians kill Hurtaut's brother and send several savagely mutilated prisoners with his body to Castres to frighten Hurtaut (11596-606). After two months, the city is finally taken and the women are freed. Coustant joins Plaisance, and Henry presents the city, now called Plaisance, to them as their wedding present. Amaury is buried in a church built there miraculously in one night, and his body is revered as that of a saint (11791-12773).

Flanders still remains to be liberated from the infidel.

The battle descriptions now become less realistic, some of them involving dwarfs and giants. At Bruges, Henry is taken prisoner, beaten, and kept in a snake pit, but after an angel promises that he will find H  l  ne in Tours (prophecy 12888-901), he revives and bites his jailer's nose off (12915-917), before Antoine and the twins are able to free him. The action moves to Scotland, where Antoine, Brice, and the archbishop of Tours are taken prisoners at Hantonne, but are freed by the pagan king's sister, who is already secretly Christian (as was her other brother, Amaury), and asks Brice to marry her in return. Brice is at first reluctant because he wanted to join holy orders, but consents when the archbishop encourages him. On their wedding night Ludiane conceives the future Saint Brice (12774-14772).

All the men in the poem finally converge at Tours, where the hermit Felix is also summoned by an angel. They seal off the town and offer a reward for anyone who brings them news of a one-armed woman. One man wants to denounce H  l  ne, but her neighbors, to whom she now tells her story and relates that she fears to be killed, decide to escort her to Henry and beg for mercy instead. When she arrives with her entourage she is joyfully received and, after thirty-two years, reconciled with her father. Her son Martin restores the severed arm, which has been miraculously preserved all this time, to her body. All proceed to Rome for a reunion with the pope, still the same great-uncle of H  l  ne. Henry and H  l  ne soon die in Rome and are buried there. Martin becomes the new archbishop of Tours and

later the patron saint of that city. His brother Brice succeeds Henry and Antoine on the thrones of England and Constantinople, and his son, Saint Brice, succeeds his uncle, Saint Martin, as archbishop of Tours (14773-15538).

3. La Belle Hélène and the Epic Tradition

La Belle Hélène forms part of a vast tradition. It shares similar motifs with a wide variety of folk tales and stories of other genres. Some scholars have noted similarities to the Byzantine romances, such as Heliodorus's Ethiopica,³¹ another tale of endless journeys by siblings separated from their family. Here too personal fates and love interests are subordinated to the greater scheme of things: "love as an ideal... is decidedly secondary in interest to religious mysticism, sacerdotal solemnities and strategies, and the implication that a grandiose epic scheme of things, too complicated to be understood, is being worked out by the design of an inscrutable Providence."³² Another Byzantine romance, The Clementine Recognitions, has even been considered as the possible origin for some versions of La Belle Hélène, and indeed there are remarkable similarities between them.³³ While we have no proof of any direct influence

³¹ See B. P. Reardon, ed. and trans., The Collected Ancient Greek Novels (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989).

³² B. E. Perry, The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins (Berkeley: U of California P, 1967) 107.

³³ J. Schick, "Die Urquelle der Offa-Konstanze-Sage," Britannica: Festschrift fuer Max Foerster zum 60. Geburtstag (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1929) 31-56. Perry gives a summarized translation of the

of one tale on the other, it is safe to assume that older stories, transmitted through oral and/or written tradition, have enriched later ones, as we know to have been the case with folklore in general.³⁴

The dating of the composition of La Belle Hélène in its original form has been the focus of various studies. Earlier scholars had located it in the thirteenth century,³⁵ but a number of linguistic and structural similarities with several French chansons de geste from the fourteenth century (composed between 1320 and 1380) point to a later date, as does the length of the poem. Among these fourteenth-century chansons are a version of Florence de Rome, Le Chevalier au Cygne et Godefroid de Bouillon, Tristan de Nanteuil, and, particularly, the last part of Lion de Bourges.³⁶ Like these chansons, La Belle Hélène shows strong traces of the Picard dialect then spoken in the northern French provinces of Hainaut and Artois.³⁷ Since the composition of verse epics continued there longer than elsewhere in France, and since the number of repetitions in stories grew over time, an attribution to the second half of the fourteenth century seems

romance part of the Recognitions in his Appendix I.

³⁴ See Lutz Roehrich, p. 27, n. 48.

³⁵ Starting with Hermann Suchier, ed. Oeuvres poétiques de Philippe de Rémi, Sire de Beaumanoir, vol. 1, (Paris: Didot, 1884-1885).

³⁶ For references see I B 3.

³⁷ The counts of Hainaut had family ties with the crowns of France and England, which might account for the favorable presentation of an English king in this French poem composed during the Hundred Years War, Roussel, La Belle Hélène 96.

likely, especially as there are no references to La Belle Hélène prior to that time.³⁸

Some of the later prose manuscripts call the story a romance. In fact, it is not easy to make clear-cut distinctions between genres at a time when romance themes had become integrated into epic tales, as Sarah Kay has documented,³⁹ and when tales of history and hagiography had been intertwined for centuries. In La Belle Hélène elements of history, hagiography, epic, and romance are all present.

In tone and content the poem qualifies mostly as a *chanson de geste*. It describes battles and shares the wars against Saracens with the cycles of the crusades, even replicating some details of the liberation of Jerusalem from the Conquête de Jérusalem.⁴⁰ Michael Heintze notes a number of motifs found in other *chansons de geste*. He lists sons, who grow up separated from their parents as important plot elements in certain versions of Beuve de Hampton, Maugis d'Aigremont, and the Enfances Renier. Sons come to their father's aid in Floovant, Doon de la Roche,

³⁸ With the possible exception of two lines attributed to Philippe de Remi: "Je sais le roman d'Elaine/ De chief en chief," (I know the roman of Hélène from top to bottom) Roussel, La Belle Hélène 98.

³⁹ Kay traces the confluence of romance and epic in The Chansons de geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1995), esp. 6-13.

⁴⁰ For La Conquête de Jérusalem see p. 19, n. 30. Roussel discusses the epic style at length in his Contes de geste au XIVe siècle: Inspiration folklorique et écriture épique dans La Belle Hélène de Constantinople (Geneva: Droz, 1998.), 353-424. Suard contrasts La Manekine as romance to the *chansons de gestes* of Lion de Bourges and La Belle Hélène in Chanson de geste et tradition épique en France au Moyen Age (Caen: Paradigme, 1994) 373-77.

Orson de Beauvais, and Maugis d'Aigremont. The evil mother who wants to kill her son and is instead later killed by him appears in the first and the third continental versions of Beuve de Hampton, and a loyal vassal sacrifices a relative to save the life of his lord in Jourdain de Blaye and Daurel et Beton. Saints help knights in battle in the Chanson d'Antioche, and Saracen princesses had been falling in love with captured Christian knights since the Prise d'Orange in the twelfth century.⁴¹ In fact, the author of La Belle Hélène alludes to the epic tradition in the text itself, by referring to chansons from the twelfth century, such as the stories of Godefroid de Bouillon, the Conquête de Jérusalem, and Floovant.⁴²

⁴¹ Michael Heintze, "Helena von Konstantinopel," Enzyklopaedie des Maerchens: Handwoerterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzaehlforschung vol. 6 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990) col. 767-72.

⁴² La Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne et de Godefroid de Bouillon has been edited in 2 volumes by Célestin Hippeau (1874; repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969). For La Chanson de Floovant see the critical edition by Frédéric Hewitt Bateson (1938; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1973).

II. Folklore and Analogues

A. Folklore Motifs

While La Belle Hélène shares structural components with the chansons de geste and some of its content with hagiography, the poem also contains numerous motifs of the folklore tradition. One of the earliest investigations of the motif of "The Maiden without Hands" in folklore was undertaken in the nineteenth century by the Count of Puymaigre.⁴³ More recently, Hélène Bernier has compared numerous versions from Europe and Canada for their content, chronology, and structural components.⁴⁴ Besides the lost hands, other motifs are familiar from folklore: the father who wants to marry his daughter appears in "Peau d'Ane" and in "Allerleirauh."⁴⁵ The evil mother-in-law recalls stepmothers in "Cinderella" and "Snow White".⁴⁶ Hunters are ordered to bring back Snow White's tongue as proof for the girl's demise, as Gloucester cuts off Hélène's arm for the same purpose. In some versions of "The Accused Queen," as in that of Hans von Buehel, the heroine earns her keep through needlework. This may be related to the chanson de geste of Le Chevalier au Cygne et

⁴³ See Théodore de Puymaigre, "La fille aux mains coupées," Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 10 (1884): 193-209.

⁴⁴ Hélène Bernier, La fille aux mains coupées: conte-type 706 (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1971).

⁴⁵ See, respectively, Charles Perrault, Contes. Ed. Marc Soriano (Paris: Flammarion, 1989) 217-232, and Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, eds., Kinder- und Hausmaerchen (repr. Stuttgart: Unipart, 1983) 256-61.

⁴⁶ Grimm Brothers 91-98 and 193-203.

Godefroid de Bouillon, which in turn seems closely connected with the folk tale "Die sechs Schwaene."⁴⁷ In that tale a girl has to sew six shirts in order to change her enchanted brothers from swans back into humans. These motifs existed long before being written down, they filtered into the lives of the saints, and they continued to be part of folk- and fairy tales after written versions appeared.⁴⁸

The influence of folktales on literary stories is now widely accepted.⁴⁹ Jacques Le Goff speaks of their "bursting" into the clerical literature in the eleventh century; and by the fourteenth century marvelous and incredible episodes, which had previously been the domain of popular tradition, had become officially acceptable in courtly literature and embellished most narratives.⁵⁰ Old myths and folklore have also been absorbed

⁴⁷ Grimm Brothers 180-84.

⁴⁸ These motifs have all been documented in Stith Thompson, Motif Index of Folk-Literature (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955-58). The fluidity between oral and written literature is discussed in Lutz Roehrich, ed., Spaetmittlalter zwischen Schriftlichkeit und Muendlichkeit (Stuttgart: Alfred Kroener, 1987) 199-222.

⁴⁹ See Francesca C. Sautman, Diana Conclado, and Giuseppe Carlo diScipio, eds., Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) introduction. Philippe Walter has traced elements of Celtic folklore in Chrétien de Troyes and in the Tristan saga in Canucule: essai de mythologie sur Yvain de Chrétien de Troyes (Paris: SEDES, 1988) and in Le Gant de Verre: le mythe de Tristan et Yseut (La Gacilly: Editions Artus, 1990). While occasionally his observations seem based on inconclusive phonetic similarities, many of his speculations are quite intriguing.

⁵⁰ "La 'réaction folklorique' ... fera irruption dans la culture occidentale à partir du XIe siècle, parallèlement aux grands mouvements hérétiques," Jacques Le Goff Pour un autre Moyen Age 233. He emphasizes the predominantly negative clerical reaction to folktales before then, 223-36.

into the Christian calendar.⁵¹

When looking for sources in popular culture, though, one must be cautious both in the selection of tales and in their interpretation, as a look at the Grimm fairytale "Das Maedchen ohne Haende" ("The Girl Without Hands") shows.⁵² It tells the story of a father who unwittingly trades his daughter to the devil, and then asks for her mutilation and causes her flight. She eventually marries a king who has silver hands made for her. The king leaves for war and when his wife bears a son, his mother gladly relates the good news to him, but the devil interferes, intercepts her message and suppresses the king's loving reply, ordering instead mother and child killed. The good mother-in-law helps the young woman to escape with her baby, keeping the tongue and eyes of a doe as proof of their deaths. An angel restores the heroine's hands, and her husband finds her seven years later.

Johann Bolte and Georg Polívka point out that the tale originally entailed an incestuous father, and Irene Gnarra also speaks of an earlier version that "contains the motifs of the incestuous father, the exchanged letters, and the calumniated wife."⁵³ It is impossible to know whether the folk tale might

⁵¹ Walters also traces the incorporation of folklore and myth into the Christian calendar in Mythologie chrétienne: rites et mythes du moyen âge (Paris: Editions Entente, 1992).

⁵² Grimm 123-27.

⁵³ Bolte and Polívka 296. Irene Gnarra, Philippe de Remi's La Manekine: Text, Translation, Commentary (New York: Garland, 1988) xxi. One of the foremost Grimm scholars and recent editor of their fairy tales also mentions changes in that story between 1812 and 1819 and points out the

have originally influenced the early literary versions or whether it was the other way around. Since the Grimm Brothers gathered their stories among educated people, their tales might well have been "contaminated" by literary versions. In fact, in their introduction to the 1812 edition, the brothers point out the affinity between their tales and the Nibelungen Saga and the Tristan legend. They also announce their decision to delay an intended translation of the Pentamerone as well as of the Gesta Romanorum in favor of the German tales.⁵⁴ Since their German tales from a "national past" presumably answered a longing for "national authenticity" at a time of national humiliation under Napoleon, their nineteenth-century Romantic notion of a recovery of the "primitive" and popular roots of the "people" must be regarded with suspicion.⁵⁵

Since we know that some of the older motifs were suppressed when the tales were prepared for the famous children's edition of the Grimm's Fairy tales, it seems most likely that the original

relationship to similar tales with the incest motif, Hans-Joerg Uther, ed., Brueder Grimm: Kinder- und Hausmaerchen, vol. 4 (Muenchen: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1996) vol. 4, 68-70.

⁵⁴ See their foreword, repr. Heinz Roelleke, ed., Kinder- und Hausmaerchen, gesammelt durch die Brueder Grimm, (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1986) vi, xii. The Pentamerone actually contains one of the analogues to La Belle H el ene, see my Appendix.

⁵⁵ Any references to foreign literary works are eliminated in their foreword to the edition of 1819; see Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Preface to the Kinder- und Hausmaerchen gesammelt durch die Brueder Grimm (1819)," in Medievalism and the Modernist Temper, eds. Howard Bloch and Stephen Nichols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996) 475-92. For a "relationship between national humiliation and the emergence of philology" in the early 1800's, see Gumbrecht and Schnapp 488, n. 8.

version told of an incestuous father, whose illicit design on his daughter was later channeled into the invention of a devil-figure.⁵⁶ Certainly, the good mother-in-law in "Das Maedchen ohne Haende" stands in marked contrast to most other fairy tales where the stepmother is usually haughty and conniving.

Margaret Schlauch sees the figure of the evil stepmother related to tension between an established matriarchy and an emerging patriarchy, and regards the contest between these two systems as one of the most important themes in the stories of the Accused Queen. She observes that fairy tales were accustomed to favor female succession: "In fairy tales, there is no cause for alarm when a king has daughters only. A son-in-law is considered a natural and highly desirable heir for such monarchs." When the daughter has to resemble her mother, it is because the female transmits the possession of the realm: "in the folk-tales the daughter needs a token linking her to her mother and thus legitimizing her succession." The - newer - romance, on the other hand, demands a male heir: "the problem is presented from the patriarchal point of view: the king must marry to have a male heir, so that his daughter and her husband may not inherit..."⁵⁷ The king's mother, then, fights against the foreign intruder who would, in a matriarchal society, assume the rights of the realm

⁵⁶ For Uther's critique of the Grimm brothers' editorial work see his interview in Der Spiegel 23 (1993): 224.

⁵⁷ Schlauch, Chaucer's Constance, all three quotes on 74.

from her. A sequence from matriarchal to patriarchic order is not undisputed,⁵⁸ but the tension between male and female succession is definitely visible in La Manekine, one of the analogues to La Belle Hélène.

B. Analogues

There are two great medieval story cycles of wrongly accused queens who suffer with Christian humility: the Crescentia- and the Constance cycle, and both were vastly popular throughout Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although these cycles consist of written stories, in both of them the influence of folklore is immediately apparent, and in some cases motifs and episodes from one cycle appear in the other.⁵⁹ The Crescentia cycle is based on the "woman coveted by her brother-in-law," a tale type classified by Aarne and Thompson under the number 712.⁶⁰ It is best known through the story of Florence de Rome with its numerous affiliations and

⁵⁸ Arnold Van Gennep disputes that patriarchy tends to follow matriarchy, though he bases his argument on legends from Australia in Religion, Mœurs et Légendes (Paris: Soc. De Mercure de France, 1905), 242. Riane Eisler argues that the original situation was a "sacred partnership," which was followed by male domination, Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995) 88-91.

⁵⁹ For the popularity the tales of Crescentia and Constance and for connections between them see Svetislav Stefanovic, "Die Crescentia-Florence-Sage: Eine kritische Untersuchung ueber ihren Ursprung und ihre Entwicklung," Anglia 35 (1912): 438-525.

⁶⁰ Aarne and Thompson 114.

derivatives.⁶¹ The brother-in-law desires the heroine and she rejects him. He then kills someone close to her (usually a child in her care; she has no children of her own) and plants the bloody weapon in her bedroom to have her falsely accused of murder. She is banished, but not mutilated. In the end she becomes a famous healer, and those who have done her wrong end up seeking her help, willing to confess their past misdeeds.

The Constance cycle also includes the motif of the falsely accused and exiled queen, but the heroine usually has one or more children and is (generally) persecuted by her mother-in-law.⁶² In a subgroup of this cycle the young heroine loses her hand(s) or an arm. This group of tales was the subject of a dissertation by Heinrich Daeumling in 1912, and, more recently, of the study by Hélène Bernier already mentioned.⁶³ There are four typical episodes connected with the tale type of the "Maiden without Hands," classified under the number 706:⁶⁴

⁶¹ Florence de Rome, chanson d'aventure du premier quart du XIVE siècle, ed. Axel Wallenskoeld, (Paris: SATF, 1907-09) 2 vols. In "L'origine et l'évolution du conte de la femme chaste convoitée par son beau-frère (Légende de Crescentia)," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 14 (1912), Wallenskoeld supported an Oriental origin of the story, while Stefanovich argues for English provenance. A shortened version in Middle English is entitled Le Bone Florence de Rome, making it sound curiously analogous to La Belle Hélène de Constantinople; for a summary see Mehl, 140-45.

⁶² For thorough background information on the Constance cycle and its connection to La Belle Hélène see Schlauch, Chaucer's Constance and A. B. Gough, "The Constance Saga," Palaestra 23 (1902): 1-84.

⁶³ Heinrich Daeumling, Studie ueber den Typus des 'Maedchens ohne Haende' innerhalb des Konstanze-Zyklus, diss., Munich U, 1912. For Bernier see p. 26, n. 44.

⁶⁴ See Aarne and Thompson 111.

1. Mutilation. The heroine has her hands cut off a) because she will not marry her father, b) because her father has sold her to the devil, c) because her mother (or sister)-in-law is jealous of her.
2. Marriage. She marries a king, who finds her by the sea, in a stable, in the forest, or in a garden.
3. Slander and exile. She is falsely accused and flees again, this time with her child (or children), because her father, her mother (sister)-in-law, or the devil changes a letter addressed to the king.
4. Recovery. She recovers her hand(s) again through a miracle and is reunited with her family.

These episodes do not always follow in the same sequence. In some cases the heroine cuts her own hand or orders both her hands cut off before her first exile (or flight) in order to avoid the marriage with her father; in others her hand(s) (or arm) is/are cut off later on, before the second exile, because of the mother-in-law's (or someone else's) jealousy. In some versions she regains her hand(s) before her marriage, in others only after her second exile, as is the case in La Belle Hélène.

In his edition of the work of Philippe de Beaumanoir, Hermann Suchier focuses on La Manekine and traces a family of literary tales for the story of the Maiden without Hands. He enumerates eighteen analogues of various genres, from saints'

legends to romances, the Life of Constance among them.⁶⁵ His compilation has remained the core for later ones, such as those by Schlauch and Gough.⁶⁶ It also formed the basis of Gough's attempt to construct a Lachmanian family tree for the various "forms of the Constance Saga," and while that "genealogy" remains pure conjecture, there is undoubtedly a close association between several of the analogues.⁶⁷ Most recently Roussel has enumerated twenty-four analogues for La Belle Hélène. The stories vary tremendously in length and style. Most of them are in prose; some are dramatized versions. Several are only a few pages long and were either used as exempla or inserted into collections of stories. Some emphasize the hagiographic, others the romance element; none employs the epic style of La Belle Hélène.⁶⁸

I have selected five of the most substantial and influential versions for closer scrutiny in order to profile the specific characteristics of La Belle Hélène. I have focused on tales written in Latin, English, French, and German, and where there existed similar tales in the same language I chose the earliest version, neglecting stories that are only a few pages long. As a result I will review five additional tales, all

⁶⁵ Suchier xxv-liii; La Manekine is not included.

⁶⁶ See Schlauch, Chaucer's Constance 69-70, and Gough, The Constance Saga 2-6.

⁶⁷ See Gough, The Constance Saga 13.

⁶⁸ Roussel provides summaries for all of the analogues in Conter de geste 73-140. For a list of his 24 analogues and information on their publication see my Appendix; the Life of Constance is counted only once, in the form of Trivet.

contemporary with or older than La Belle Hélène.

The first is generally accepted to be the oldest extant version, the Vitae Duorum Offarum, written in Latin in the early thirteenth century. Then follows La Manekine, generally dated from the late thirteenth century and one of the earliest tales in French. Mai und Beafloer is the oldest known German version (it is from the thirteenth century). Emare, an English romance, appeared at the end of the fourteenth century. The Life of Constance, finally, is part of the mid-fourteenth century Anglo-Norman Chronicle by the Dominican friar Nicolas Trivet, and became famous through its retellings by Gower and Chaucer.⁶⁹ Profiling La Belle Hélène against these stories will reveal significant differences between them and lay the foundation for my approach to the poem in chapter V.

B. Summaries of Five Analogues

1. Vitae Duorum Offarum ⁷⁰

Suchier, like most scholars until now, viewed the Vitae Duorum Offarum, (henceforth Offa I) as the oldest story to connect the motifs of incest, exchanged letters, exile, and

⁶⁹ A summary of the main results of that comparison follows on pp. 70-77.

⁷⁰ The oldest manuscript known is London, British Library, Cotton Nero D I (fols. 2-25), edited by William Wats in the Liber Additamentorum to his Matthaei Parisiensis, Chronica Majora, London, 1640. The tale is reprinted in F. J. Furnival, Edmund Brock, and W. A. Clouston, eds. Origins and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (London: Chaucer Society, 2nd series, vol. 1, 1872): 73-84. For caution with Brock's transcription see p. 37, n. 74.

mutilation.⁷¹ It constitutes an episode in the life of a legendary Offa I, supposed to have been king of the West Angles in the fourth century.⁷² The story is told in the Liber Additamentorum, a collection of texts accompanying the thirteenth-century Chronica Majora of Matthew of Paris.⁷³

The daughter of the king of York has escaped the incestuous desire of her father. He had ordered her to be taken to a remote wasteland to be slain and fed to the wild beasts. His agents spare her because of her beauty, but leave her in the forest without any food. She is living on roots and herbs when Offa finds her. The king marries her and they have several children, both boys and girls. One day, the king of Northumbria asks Offa to help fight the Scots and in return offers to marry his daughter and to subject himself and his people to Offa's authority. Offa accepts and soon announces his victory in a letter home.

Unfortunately, the messenger spends the night at the court of the king of York, presumably without knowing that he is Offa's

⁷¹ Only Roussel argues that La Manekine might have been composed earlier, see p. 38, n. 74.

⁷² See Roussel, Conter de geste 77.

⁷³ Henry Luard argued that the Liber Additamentorum was not the work of Paris, but that of a different monk of St. Albans, probably in the twelfth century; see Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora, Rolls Series (CM), VI (1882; repr. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprints, 1964) vii-x. Edith Rickert "The Old English Offa Saga," Modern Philology 2 (1904): 29-76 agrees, but Richard Vaughan reinstates Matthew as the author; see Matthew Paris (1958; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, reissued with supplementary bibliography, 1979).

father-in-law.⁷⁴ The king of York replaces Offa's note with a forgery, which not only reports defeat, but also blames it on Offa's marriage to an evil woman. The new letter orders the queen and her children to be hacked to pieces and left to the wild animals. (We can only surmise that the father still wants to punish his disobedient daughter, although we don't know how he found out that she survived, married Offa, and had children with him). Mother and children are led to a desolate place and the children have hands and feet cut off and die while the mother is spared a second time. A hermit hears desperate cries not only from the mother, but also from the corpses. When he makes the sign of the cross over them the children return to life, and he offers shelter to them and their mother. Some time later, during a hunting expedition, the grieving Offa finds them. Gratefully he promises to build a cathedral, but he does not keep his promise, and as a result the kingdoms he had conquered during his lifetime regain their independence again. Many generations later Offa's offspring and namesake, Offa II, the historic king of the Mercians (757-96), builds the church of St. Albans at the location where the remains of St. Alban were found, and where it still stands today.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Brock misread the Latin and thought that the messenger spent the night at the court of Offa's son-in-law. According to Roussel, however, the text in Wats' edition reads: "illius Regis, cuius filiam Offa [not Offae] sibi copulaverat", meaning that the messenger stayed at the court of that king whose daughter Offa had married, i.e. at Offa's father-in-law's; see Conter de geste 75.

⁷⁵ Gough, *The Constance Saga* 60 and 63.

Several similarities with La Belle Hélène are obvious: a beautiful young woman flees the incestuous advances of her father and gets married to the king of a foreign land. Another young woman is given in marriage in exchange for help against an enemy, though in Offa I it is the heroine's daughter, not her mother. Letters are forged, a family is separated and reunited, and limbs are severed from and reunited with bodies. Religion plays an important part, as does a healing miracle tied to a specific location that is still in existence.

But there are also considerable differences: We don't hear what happens to the wife's father, the king of York, and he is never reconciled with his daughter. She is not mutilated but her children are, and they die from their wounds. Their mother's name is not mentioned: this story is not about her, but about the founding men of English Christianity and the connection of St. Albans to the royal house and its lineage, a story in which women are merely peripheral. Margaret Schlauch has additionally cautioned against seeing too close an affiliation between Offa I and other tales of the "Girl Without Hands," because here it is the heroine's father, and not her mother-in-law as in most analogues, who exchanges the letters.

Finally, the story does not end with the consolidation of realms but rather with their dispersal. All the kings whom Offa I had subdued fell away from him or from his successors because of his failure to build the promised cathedral. Whereas other tales emphasize unity, reconciliation, and God's benevolence,

this tale of God's wrath against those who neglect Him strikes a completely different tone.

2. La Manekine

While Offa I is the analogue most different from La Belle Hélène, La Manekine follows it more closely than any of the other stories reviewed here.⁷⁶ Suchier's edition points out that the tale is a combination of two well-known types of narratives: that of the folk tale of "La Peau d'Ane" (incestuous father combined with Cinderella motif) and that of the persecuted woman, as represented by the cycle of Constance. Based on these motifs, Philippe de Beaumanoir has constructed a symmetrically balanced and psychologically motivated story that has close affinities with the German tale of Mai und Beafloer.⁷⁷

The king of Hungary, who has one daughter named Joie, promises his dying wife to marry a woman only as beautiful as she is. He remains a widower for years, but finally his nobles encourage him to marry again, arguing that he needs a male (not just a female) heir in order to avoid upheaval in the realm. The

⁷⁶ Quotes are from Hermann Suchier, ed. Oeuvres poétiques. For a translation into modern French prose see Christine Marchello-Nizia, La Manekine (Paris: Stock-Plus, 1980). For a modern verse translation see Gnarra, p. 28, n. 53.

⁷⁷ Arguing for the authorship of Philippe de Beaumanoir the father (rather than the son), Roussell raises the possibility that La Manekine might have been composed around the year 1240, thirty years earlier than previously assumed, Conte de geste 86. This would make La Manekine the oldest tale known today, even older than Offa I. Irene Gnarra supports the later, generally accepted, date of 1270, introduction xviii.

I am supplying some verbal quotes for later comparison with Mai und Beafloer and also with La Belle Hélène.

wisest of them counsels the others:

"Seignour", fait il, "escoutés moi.
 En cest païs avons un roi
 qui ot feme mout boine et sage;
 En sa mort avons grant damage.
 De celle femme n'a nul hoir
 Fors une fille, au dire voir,
 Qui est mout boine et mout courtoise.
 Et non pourquoi en briquetoize
 Ert li roialmes de Hongrie,
 Se feme l'avoit en baille
 Pour c'est il bon que nous alons
 Au roi, et de cuer li prions
 Qu'il pregne feme a nostre los." (205-17)
 "Lords," said he, "listen to me.
 In this country we have a King
 Who had a very good and wise wife;
 In her death we have a great loss,
 To tell the truth, and very curteous.
 Nevertheless, in the kingdom of Hungary
 There might be a break from the line of succession ⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Gnarra translates "briquetoize" with "a break in the line of succession." Tobler-Lommatzsch, Altfranzoesisches Woerterbuch (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925) 1140, referring to these very lines from La Manekine, reads "briquetoize" as "brique toise," translating it as "piège tendu," meaning "a set trap". Since a trap is not a very appropriate image at this moment in the text, I suggest that the nobles are afraid for the well being of the realm, which might fall into little pieces (briques) if the realm did not have a male heir.

If a woman had it in her power.
 For this reason, it would be wise for us to go
 To the King and to beg him sincerely
 To take a wife, with our approbation."

(Trans. Gnarra)

Reluctantly he sends messengers to find a queen who resembles his deceased wife. When none can be found, the nobles suggest that he marry his daughter, by then 16 years old, who is indeed as lovely as her mother had been. Even the clergy agrees that the importance of procuring a male heir for the realm outweighs the sin of incest, which they would "take upon themselves":

Longuement entr'eus desputerent.
 En la fin li clerc s'acorderent
 Que il le roy en prieroient
 Et sur aus le pecié penroient.
 A l'apostole monterront
 Le grant pourfit pour quoi fait l'ont. (335-40)
 They argued among themselves for a long time.
 Finally the clerics agreed,
 That they would petition the King to do it
 And damn themselves with the sin.
 They would impress upon the pope
 The absolute necessity for their actions.

(Trans. Gnarra)

The king at first refuses, but then actually falls in love with his daughter and agrees. She is horrified and cuts off her left hand to thwart him, because he cannot marry someone physically incomplete:

"Sire, bien vous ai entendu
 Mais roïne ne doi pas estre.
 Car je n'ait point de main senestre,
 Et rois ne doit pas prenre fame
 Qui n'ait tous se membres, par m'ame!" (794-798)

"My lord, I have understood you very well;
 But I may not be a queen,
 For I do not have my left hand;
 And a king must not marry a woman
 who does not have all her members, on my soul!"
 (Trans. Gnarra)

Her hand falls into the river Yse and is swallowed by a sturgeon. The king, furious, orders his daughter burnt, but his steward secretly puts her in a rudderless boat, which arrives eventually in Scotland. After a year, the young king of Scotland decides to marry her despite her mutilation, although Joie refuses to divulge her name and provenance. His mother, however, protests and withdraws from court.

The king decides to call his wife Manekine, due to the lack of her left hand:

Don't li conte le rois d'Escoce (7239)

[. . .]

Comment il li mist le sournom

Que Manekine la clamoit

Pour chou que une main n'avoit. (7248-7250)

"Thereupon the King of Scotland recounted

[. . .]

How he bestowed upon her a nickname;

To wit, he named her Manekine

Because she did not have one hand.

(Trans. Gnarra)

She gives birth to a son while her husband is at a tournament in France and announces the arrival of an heir in a letter. Her mother-in-law replaces it with a forgery reporting the birth of a monster and subsequently also turns the king's request to keep mother and offspring safe into an order to burn them alive. Again a faithful steward interferes and burns two effigies (mannequins) instead.⁷⁹ Mother and son are put in the same rudderless boat in which she once arrived and they land at Rome, where a senator gives them refuge.

When the young king returns home and finds out what happened, he has his mother imprisoned in a tower and then sets

⁷⁹ Even though the text names the lack of a hand (main) as reason for the name Manekine, it is also possible that it originated from the burning of the mannequins, i.e. substitute figures.

out to find Joie and her child. Seven years later he enters the senator's house, sees a boy playing with a ring that he recognizes as his wife's wedding band, and realizes that he has found his son and wife. At the same time, Joie's father has arrived in Rome to beg forgiveness for his sins and make a public confession, at which his daughter recognizes him. Miraculously, some clergymen find Joie's hand floating in a fountain and the pope restores it to her arm. A celestial voice explains that it had been preserved in an internal pocket inside a sturgeon.⁸⁰ Joie inherits Armenia from her mother, while her father transfers the reign of Hungary to her husband, so that the realms of Hungary and Armenia become united with the kingdom of Scotland.

Besides the obvious similarities, there are some differences between La Belle Hélène and La Manekine. Hélène's mutilation results from persecution by her mother-in-law, while Joie resorts to auto-mutilation in order to prevent incest. Joie's father is king of Hungary, while Hélène's is king of Constantinople. In La Manekine the Scots are neither enemies nor pagans and the heroine marries their king. They have only one son, Jehan, and he does not change his name, while his mother does. In both stories, though, the heroine is reconciled with her father and the maternal and paternal realms are consolidated.

The notion of time in La Manekine is carefully structured

⁸⁰ The sturgeon calls to mind other helpful fish from the Old Testament, such as those in the stories of Tobias and Jonas, and the fact that the Greek word for fish, ἰχθύς, has since the early days of Christendom served as an anagram for "Jesus Christ Holy Son of God."

according to the Christian calendar: Joie arrives in Scotland on Christmas Eve, her marriage is celebrated at Pentecost, her husband promises to return before Lent, she departs from Scotland in the rudderless boat on Good Friday, and so forth. Yet, as Marchello-Nizia has pointed out, archaic motifs might well persist underneath the layer of Christian piety, such as the husband's autumnal departure, and the burning of mannequins on carnival.⁸¹ As written by Beaumanoir, the poem reflects a deep personal religiosity, ending with a call to resist despair and an appeal for divine protection. Missionary zeal and crusades, prevalent themes in La Belle Hélène, have no place here.

3. Mai und Beaflo⁸²

The oldest of three known German analogues to La Belle Hélène dates from the middle of the thirteenth century (1257-59).⁸³ Like La Manekine it emphasizes the personal side of the story, but while the author shows devotion, religion does not seem to be his main object. Instead, he appears to be interested

⁸¹ See the introduction to her prose translation of La Manekine. For a Freudian interpretation of the tale see Thelma S. Fenster, "Beaumanoir's La Manekine: in Kind(r)ead: Incest, Doubling, and Death," American Imago 39 (1982): 41-98.

⁸² Dichtungen des deutschen Mittelalters, vol. 7 (Leipzig: Goeschensche Verlagshandlung, 1848). This edition also contains the related prose tale "Der Kuenic ze Riuzen," which in turn closely resembles the 1280 verse form of it in Jansen Enikel's Weltchronik; see Philip Strauch, ed., Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 30, Deutsche Chroniken vol. 3 (Hanover: Hahnsche.Buchhandlung 1891-1900) ll. 26677-27356.

⁸³ The two others are Hans von Buehel, Die Koenigstochter von Frankreich, ed. J.F.L. Theodor Merzdorf (Oldenburg: Schulze, 1867), and Enikel (see previous footnote).

in describing the values of true love between Christian men and women.

After the death of his wife, Telion, the King of Rome, falls in sinful love with his daughter Beafior (meaning "beautiful flower"). With the help of a couple named Roboal and Benigna she flees alone, but with her treasure and in a dress adorned with precious stones (col. 40, 20-23), on a boat. She arrives at a country called Mailand, which is named after its young ruler, Count Mai. They fall in love and marry against the wishes of his mother Eliacha but with the agreement of his counselors. Before a year is over, Mai leaves to assist his uncle, the King of Spain, against an attack by pagans ("heiden"), specifically against King Kobar of Marseille and the count of Baghdad:

Im hat widerboten dar
 Von Marsiljis kunec Kobar
 Und der voget von Baldac ... (Col. 99, 11-13)
 He met with resistance
 From king Kobar of Marseille
 And from the governor of Baghdad ...

Beafior remains under the tutelage of the counselors Effeide and Cornelius and soon gives birth to a son. The messenger relaying the happy news, however, spends the night at the dowager castle of the mother-in-law, Klarekunde, who substitutes another letter for his that tacitly accuses Beafior

of adultery by reporting that she had given birth to a monster. She also converts Mai's instruction to keep mother and offspring safe until his return into an order to kill them immediately. Instead, they are put on the same boat in which she arrived (again with the treasure) and put out to sea; meanwhile they are officially declared dead.

When Mai returns from Spain, the people, who loved Beafloer, are so angered by her demise that they try to stone him, so that he can only travel by night (col. 162, 21-22). With the help of Bishop Haug von Anderville the betrayal is discovered and Mai kills his mother with the sword ("daz swert er durch die muoter stach" [he stuck the sword through the mother] col. 173, 32). Meanwhile Beafloer's boat, under God's guidance, floats to Rome, where Roboal and Benigna, who are walking along the Tiber, bring it on land. The Pope baptizes the child to a name similar to that of his mother: Schoifloris (a germanicized version of Beafloer col. 190, 36); but later on he is always called Lois (see for example col. 212, 15).

Count Mai, who thinks his wife and son are dead, contemplates suicide, but bishop Haug convinces him to go to Rome to repent for killing his mother and to commend himself to God. When Mai arrives in the city, he sends one of his followers to find lodging, and they are invited into Roboal's house. Roboal promises Beafloer, who has not laughed in eight years, that she will soon find her husband again (col. 214, 26-7). He and Benigna fit her with the same dress and crown in which she had

fled the first time - and thus presumably also the second time - and place her opposite Mai at dinner. She recognizes Mai, but he mourns for Beafloer whom he believes dead. Cornelius and Effreide vaguely remember her dress, but then decide that there may be several of them in Rome (col. 218, 6-25). Finally, her father, now for the first time identified as the emperor ("keiser", col. 236, 10), publicly confesses his sin before the Pope, and Roboal presents Beafloer to him as well as to her husband. The emperor resigns to become a hermit; the pope crowns Beafloer, his godchild, empress of Rome, making Mai the emperor. They "adopt" Roboal as their father and make Cornelius and Effreide the rulers of Mailand. The text plays with the couple's names, comparing peace flourishing in the realm to a rose (Beafloer) blooming in May (Mai), and closes with the praise of Jesus Christ.

The poem reflects on the dangers of love, which are foreshadowed early on (col. 12, 9-13 and col. 21, 31- 40). It serves as an example of the right kind of Minne (love), a word frequently used and once repeated seven times within thirty-one lines (col. 193, 22 - col. 194, 12). While the father is tempted by "Satanas" to lust, the spouses know the meaning of true love: Mai sees Beafloer as mistress of "Zuht," "Wisheit," "Triwe," and "Maze"; meaning restraint, wisdom, loyalty, and moderation (col. 176, 13-29), all standards of medieval courtly behavior. Love does not cause the young husband to neglect the necessary social obligations, which are part of the knightly code, such as supporting relatives and fighting against pagans (col. 100, 5-7).

Even though Beaflo bemoans that he has to leave, she too accepts that he must strive for "dignity and honor" (col. 101, 23-102). As in La Manekine, they place their fate in God's hand and patiently endure their misery without giving in to the temptation of despair and suicide.⁸⁴

While many analogues have important characters who remain anonymous, in this story every individual has a name, but they come from different linguistic backgrounds: Telion could be of Greek origin, while the mother-in-law's name, Eliacha, recalls names in the Old Testament. Cornelius and Benigna are of Latin origin, while Effreid and Klaremunt appear Germanic. The names of the protagonists introduce allegory more familiar from courtly romance, Mai referring to the month of May and Beaflo being the "Beautiful Flower."

While in this story the Latin and Germanic elements peacefully coexist (Cornelius is as loyal as Effreide), another German tale emphasizes opposition. Die Koenigstochter von Frankreich by Hans von Buehel, an analogue from 1401 that gives no names at all, uses the story to explain the origin of the

⁸⁴ Reasons for despair were not difficult to find in fourteenth-century Europe: "After more than three centuries of almost uninterrupted economic growth, Europe experienced a disastrous shrinkage in the middle years of the fourteenth century. Many factors caused this... the series of famine years from 1317 onward, the closing of the silk road to the Orient, the banking crisis of 1343-1345, the Black Death ..., which in its first visitation to Europe in 1348 may have taken the lives of one-third to one-half of the inhabitants..."; see Susan Stuart, "The Dominion of Gender: Women's Fortunes in the High Middle Ages," in Becoming Visible: Women in European History, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz, and Susan Stuard (1977; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2nd ed. 1987) 153-72, quote on 167.

Hundred Years War between England and France (1339-1453).⁸⁵ It describes the incestuous father as the King of France, while the noble husband is the King of England, who claims the crown of France through his wife, just as Edward III of England (r. 1327-77) based his claim against Philip VI of France (r. 1328-50) on the female line.⁸⁶

4. Emare

The Middle English romance Emare seems to have been written in Yorkshire at the end of the fourteenth century.⁸⁷ The author claims that his story is based on an old Breton lay called Egare (1030-33). As in La Manekine the heroine changes her name after leaving her father's house. Her names, reflecting her state of being, first Emare (refined) and then Egare (outcast), seem to

⁸⁵ For similarities to and differences from Mai und Beafloer see E. Scheunemann, "Mai und Beafloer" und Hans von Buehel's "Die Koenigstochter von Frankreich", eine vergleichende Untersuchung zur Darstellung im Hohen und Spaeten Mittelalter" (Breslau, [Wrocław]: Maruschke und Berendt Verlag, 1934).

⁸⁶ The tale relates victory over Scotland and the conquest of Calais, events likely to allude to Edward's war against the Scots (1333) and his attack against Calais (1347), Roussel, Conter de geste 118. Bartolomeo Fazio, in De Origine inter Gallos et Britannos belli historia, also connects the tale to the Hundred Years War but reverses the nationalities: he portrays the English King "Edouard" as the incestuous father, and the virtuous husband as French, see Roussel, Conter de geste 123-24.

⁸⁷ The text has been edited twice, first by A. B. Gough as Emare (London: Sampson Low Marston, 1901), and soon thereafter by Edith Rickert as The Romance of Emare (London: Oxford UP, 1906). Although Rickert is the more experienced scholar, Gough is easier to quote because he transposed the yough and thorn. Emare is also the subject of his dissertation On the Middle English Metrical Romance of Emare (U Kiel: Fiencke, 1900).

indicate a tale of French origin.⁸⁸ This story revolves around the motif of the splendid magical gown, recalling the fairy tales of "Peau d'Ane," "Allerleirauh," and "Cinderella."

An Emperor, Sir Artyus, and his wife Erayne have a daughter, Emare. The mother dies shortly after the birth and a nurse raises the girl, who grows up to be outstandingly beautiful and wise. One day, the emperor receives a magnificent cloth from the King of Sicily ("cysyle"). The daughter of a Saracen Emir had worked on it for seven years ("Seven wynter hyt was yn makynge," l. 118) to win the love of the Sultan's son. Three of its corners are adorned with representations of famous lovers: Amadas and Ydoyne, Tristram and Isolde, Flor and Blancheflor, the fourth depicts the Emir's daughter herself with the Sultan's son, who is represented as a unicorn:

For hys sake the cloth was wrowght,
 She loved him in hart and thowght
 As telleth this storye,
 The fayr[e] mayden here by-forn
 Was portrayed an unykorn
 Wyth hys horn so hye. (160-65)

It is bedecked with so many precious stones that its splendor is blinding the emperor, who calls it unreal, a thing of "fayry":

The cloth [hyt] was dysplayed sone:

⁸⁸ See Rickert, The Romance of Emare xxix.

The emperor looked ther upone
 And myghte hyt not se.
 For glystetyng of the ryche ston,
 Redy syght [ne] had he none,
 And sayde: How may thys be?
 The emperour [than] sayde on hygh:
 'Sertes thys ys a fayry,
 Or elles a vanyte.'
 The kyng of cysyle answered thon:
 'So riche a j[e]well ys ther non
 In all Crystyante.' (97-108)

The splendor of the cloth mirrors the beauty of Emare: both bedazzle the emperor with their beauty, but he has to learn to appreciate beauty without being blinded by enchantment (fayry). The king thinks of the cloth and its outward splendor as the richest jewel in all Christianity, but it is Emare, "the konnendest wommon/ I trowe that be yn Crystendom" (428-29), who is really "the fayrest thyng/ That on erthe myght go!" (561-62).

The cloth was delivered to the sultan, but we never learn what happened to the Saracen lovers. It does not bode well for them that the King of Sicily won the cloth from the Sultan in battle and is now presenting it to the Christian emperor. The emperor calls his daughter, falls in love with her, and decides to send for the pope to marry them. In the meantime he has a dress made out of the cloth, and when Emare wears it, her beauty

shines so bright that she, like the cloth, seems otherworldly:

The the emperor was glad and blythe,
 And lette shape a robe swythe
 Of thylke cloth of golde.
 And when hyt her was don upone,
 She semed non erthely wommon
 That marked was of molde. (241-46)

Ironically, while the Saracens have adopted courtly values from the West, the Western king is blinded and led to sin by Eastern riches. The splendid robe, fabricated in order to convey love and taken by force from its legitimate owner, evokes illicit lust instead and almost brings death. It recalls the garment poisoned with the blood of the would-be ravisher Nessus that Deianira unwittingly presented to Hercules in order to regain his love, but which killed him instead.⁸⁹

Even though we hear no objections to the marriage from the pope, Emare refuses to consent. Her father expels her on a rudderless boat, in her dress, but without food or drink. Miraculously she survives and, after a stormy voyage of "a good sevene-nyght and more," (326) she arrives in a land called Galys.⁹⁰ The king's steward, named Kadore, gives shelter to the

⁸⁹ John Gower's Confessio Amantis, Book II tells this story right after that of Constance, see Russell Peck, ed. (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1980) 139-44.

⁹⁰ Gough discusses arguments for and against this being either Wales or Galicia, and decides in favor of the Spanish province, Emare 32.

young woman who now calls herself Egaré. When she is presented to the King, the robe again works its magic and Emare looks supernaturally beautiful:

The cloth upon her shone so bryght:
 When she was theryn y-dyght
 She semed non erthly thyng. (393-95)

The king falls in love with her and marries her despite the objections of his mother who suspects a "fiend" behind the unnatural beauty ("Sone, thys ys a fende/ In this worthy wede," 446-7). When the young husband has to go to the aid of the king of France against the Saracens, he leaves his pregnant wife with Sir Kadore. A son is born and given the name Segramour (505-06).⁹¹ The mother-in-law intercepts the announcement and reports the birth of a three-headed devil (535-40). Instead of her son's loving reply, she sends directions to expose them at sea and so Emare endures a second stormy sea voyage of seven days:

Now thys lady dwelled thore
 A full sevene-nyght and more
 As hyt was Goddes wille,
 Wyth karefull herte and sykyng sore. (673-76)

These lines are almost identical to those (325-36) describing the first voyage, emphasizing the repetition of the

⁹¹ This name is reminiscent of the Arthurian cycle, one more illustration of the migration of names between stories and genres.

event as well as the continuing mercy of God. Again she prays to Jesus and his mother, this time possibly herself recalling the image of the nativity scene as she nurses her baby on the boat, a castaway from society. Again she is almost dead from hunger and thirst when a merchant named Jurdan rescues her and her son. They stay with Jurdan in Rome for seven years.

At his return the king of Galys discovers the plot and intends to have his mother burnt, but on the advice of his nobles he sends her into exile instead. Seven years later he decides to go to Rome to do penance and takes lodgings at Jurdan's house.⁹² Recognizing him, Emare sends her son to serve him wine, so that the king will notice his resemblance to her. At the same time her father, the emperor, also comes to Rome to atone for his sins and stays at the same house, where a joyful reunion follows. Segramour is acknowledged to be the emperor's male heir: succession is secured through the male line and patriarchic "order" is restored.

Emare introduces the magic robe, but lacks the motifs of mutilation and healing. As in La Manekine, the royal couple has only one son whose name remains the same while the mother changes her name in exile, and in the end the family realms are combined. We have seen some preoccupation with the queen's dress in Mai und Beafloor, but in Emare it has a much more prominent role. In its

⁹² In other analogues the king actually kills his mother and therefore later goes to Rome to do penance. Presumably the author of Emare suppressed the mother's killing as unsuitable for his courtly audiences, and so his revised version lacks narrative sense when it

fairy tale quality, the story of Emare recalls that of Mélusine, the supernatural wife of a mortal who hides her true identity, as Emare's hides hers by changing her name.⁹³ The dress symbolizes a conflict not between religions, but between values within Christendom. Unlike her father, Emare's husband does not confuse the person with her outward splendor and yearns for his wife regardless of her dress. The relationship with the Saracens is ambiguous. They are enemies and capable of magic, but they are neither monsters nor barbarians; rather they are admired for their culture and portrayed as educated in courtly etiquette. The wars against them are mentioned but not described in detail; the true enemies are unbridled passion, greed, falseness, and jealousy.

5. The Life of Constance

a. Nicholas Trivet

In his Anglo-Norman Chronicle, a history of England from the mid-fourteenth century, the Dominican friar Nicholas Trivet

still sends the king to Rome for penance.

⁹³ In some versions Mélusine, like Emare, wears a beautiful gown when she is found. This gown is reminiscent of the Cinderella and Peau d'Ane tales. Like Hélène, Mélusine is often called La Belle Mélusine, and her future husband also finds her near a fountain. For different versions of the story and a connection between Mélusine, water, and the notion of cultivation and plenitude see Jacques Le Goff, "Mélusine maternelle et défricheuse," in his Pour un Autre Moyen Age 307-331. Like Hélène, Mélusine functions as a "founding mother," see Melusine of Lusignan: founding fiction in late Medieval France, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm Maddox (Athens, GA.: U of Georgia P, 1996). For a reading of the ambiguous nature of Mélusine and her misformed offspring as "polluting" in terms of Mary Douglas, see Gabrielle Spiegel, "Maternity and Monstrosity: Reproductive Biology in the *Roman de Mélusine*," Maddox 100-24.

includes a chapter on the Life of Constance, daughter of a legendary Roman emperor named Tiberius Constantin.⁹⁴ At thirteen she is beautiful as well as educated and converts three Saracen merchants to Christianity. On the return home they tell their sultan of her beauty and wisdom and he decides to marry her. Once the pope and the senate have given their consent, Tiberius demands that the sultan convert to Christianity first. He agrees and declares not only peace between Christians and Saracens, but also promises the Christians access to all the holy places in his land and sovereignty over Jerusalem. Constance sets out by boat with a large entourage and much treasure. The sultan's mother prepares a feast, at which she has every Christian (including her own son) killed. Only three young men escape and report about the massacre back in Rome. Constance, surprisingly, is spared and launched on the open sea in a boat without sail or rudder but loaded with provisions for three years and with her dowry.

After three years and eight months she arrives in Northumbria, England, on the day before Christmas, and finds shelter with the Saxon nobleman Elda and his wife Hermengild. Constance converts Hermengild to Christianity, who then, at Constance's suggestion, miraculously restores the sight of a blind man. This miracle motivates Elda to convert also. Christianity has already been introduced to England, and the

⁹⁴ Nicholas Trivet's Anglo-Norman Chronicle as a source for the stories of Constance told by Gower and Chaucer is reprinted and discussed in Margaret Schlauch, "The Man of Law's Tale", Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, ed. W. F. Bryan and G. Dempster (New York:

bishop who baptizes the couple praises Constance's virtues to his -pagan- King Alle, who sets out to meet her.

Meanwhile one of Elda's knights, tempted by the devil, falls in love with Constance. When she rejects his advances, he takes revenge: he kills Hermengild, who shares a bed with Constance, and hides the bloody knife under Constance's pillow. She is apprehended and accused of the crime. When the felon swears upon the Bible that Constance committed the murder, the heavens open and a great fist knocks his eyes and teeth out of his head, while a voice proclaims Constance to be innocent. Alle, who has witnessed the scene, becomes a Christian and marries Constance.

Eighteen months later Alle has to go to war against the Scots. He leaves his pregnant wife under the tutelage of Elda and the bishop. She bears a son named Moris, but the messenger bringing an announcement of the birth to Alle is intercepted by her mother-in-law. In a forged letter sent on to her son, the queen mother denounces Constance as a bad spirit in the shape of a woman, whose so-called miracles were the work of evil, and whose child was hideously deformed ("une maladite forme hidouse e dolorouse" [a cursed form, hideous and painful to see]; 173).

Although the king asks that his wife and offspring be carefully guarded, his mother forwards a message that Constance should be exiled along with her young son, because "if she remained in the country, it would cause war and destruction of

Humanities P, 1958) 155-206.

all the land by foreign nations." ("si ele en la terre demorat, ceo auendreit a guere e destruccioun de toute la terre par estraunge naciouns ...", 174). Since the young queen does not want the country or its people harmed, she consents and once more enters the rudderless boat on which she had arrived, again loaded with provisions (this time for five years) and her treasure. As she and her son depart, the people curse King Alle whom they hold responsible for her exile. After two years she arrives at some pagan territory where she is well treated, but where she does not want to stay due to her faith. A Christian renegade persuades her to take him on board and then, tempted by the devil, tries to rape her, but she manages to push him into the sea.

Meanwhile Alle returns home and - as happened to Beafloer's husband, Graf Mai - he is reviled by young and old and pelted with rocks (and worse), so that he can travel only at night to his castle. ("Et come ly rois erra soun chemyn par cites et viles, de iour, en Engleterre, lui vindrent encountrauns hommes et femmes, enfauntz e veilers, e le recuilerent de crie e ledengge, gettauntz sur lui et les seuns tay et ordure e grosses peres...." And when the king was on his way through cities and villages, by day, in England, there came men and women, young and old, and they received him with cries of insult, throwing at him and his [people] mud, dirt, and big stones; 176).⁹⁵ He discovers his mother's treason and hacks her into pieces ("E a co ly coupa

⁹⁵ This incident is similar to Mai und Beafloer, where men and women want to stone the travelers (col. 162, 20-22).

la teste e le corps tut a peces...", " And he cut off her head and her body all to pieces; 177). He also swears not to marry again before he has received news from Constance.⁹⁶

After five years of exile Constance and her son are taken on board a ship sailing to Rome and are brought to the house of a senator and admiral of the Roman fleet, Arsenius. His wife Helayne is Constance's cousin, and while Constance remembers them, they don't recognize her. For unexplained reasons Constance changes her name to Custe and remains anonymous in the city of her birth, where her father is still the emperor.

King Alle makes a pilgrimage to Rome to repent for having slain his mother, and when he is seven days' journey from Rome, he sends Elda ahead to secure lodgings. They are invited to stay in one of Arsenius's castles, and eventually Constance sends her son to serve the king at table. His resemblance to Constance then induces Alle to ask for and meet the mother. After Alle is absolved from his sins by Pope Pelagius, Constance sends Moris to invite the emperor to a banquet in memory of his daughter, where she reveals herself to him. Forty days later, the emperor, with the consent of pope and senate, declares Moris, henceforth called Moris of Cappadocia, to be his heir.

The royal couple returns to England, but Alle dies a few months later in Winchester and is buried there. Constance returns to Rome half a year later to tend to her ailing father.

⁹⁶ Presumably this means that he won't marry before he has heard confirmation of Constance's death, since he certainly could not remarry if he heard that she was still alive.

He dies in her arms and she follows him a year later, on St. Clement's Day (November 23). She is buried at St. Peter's, while Elda, who had accompanied her to Rome, dies on the way back to England in Tours and is buried in the Cathedral of St. Martin's.

This text forms part of a chronicle, which might explain why its tone is less personal than in La Manekine or Mai und Beafloer. It is interwoven with popular tales of the time as well as elements of hagiography. Several elements in Trivet's story (besides the obvious ones of false accusation and banishments) recall La Belle H el ene, especially the names of St. Clement, Tours, and St. Martin and the fact that Constance's cousin is called Helayne. The name of the emperor Tiberius Constantin forms a connection with Constantinople, since a historical figure with this name reigned from 578 until 582 in that city. His daughter was called Constantina and married Maurice of Cappadocia, who followed his father-in-law on the throne and ruled Byzantium until 602. Trivet is aware of this tradition, but, citing some unknown Saxon chronicles, instead makes mother and son out of husband and wife. Other names are unusual in the context of this story, and a review of the section of the *Chronica* that contains the tale of Constance, suggests that several names, such as Hermengild, might have migrated from neighboring tales into the story of Constance.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ "The story of Constance appears as a section within the forty-seventh 'estoire,' of the reign of the emperor Tiberius," and he enumerates the contents of this section: "1. Tiberius becomes emperor and rules for thirteen years. He distributes treasure to the poor. 2. During the

Both H el ene and Constance are accosted at sea, although the details differ, but in other ways Constance's tale is closer to Mai and Beafloor: the heroine is not mutilated, she has only one son, and when she is banished, the people react with a stone-throwing revolt against their king.

Above all, Constance's family situation differs from the other stories: we don't hear of her mother's death and her father shows no incestuous desire. He seeks the consent of pope and senate not for his own marriage, but for his daughter's wedding with a foreign prince, and it is that event, and not the daughter's flight, that separates them. The introduction to the narrative resembles somewhat The King of Tars, where a Christian princess inspires such passion in the Sultan of Damas that he decides to convert.⁹⁸

This difference in the beginning leads to some illogical turns in the narrative later on. The Saracen mother-in-law kills her own son, but inexplicably allows Constance to escape with her dowry and provisions. Later, for years after Constance has

ninth year of his reign St. Benedict becomes Pope. 3. St. Gregory writes the *Livres Moraus sur Job*, and rescues the Bishop of Constantinople from an error. 4. The story of Gregory and the English slave boys (naming Alle king of Northumbria). 5. Jesus' cloak is discovered in the city of Zephat, near Jerusalem. 6. Hermengild, son of Lenigild of the Visigoths, is brutally slain by his father after abandoning Arianism for the true faith. ... 7. Pelagius succeeds St. Benedict, and reforms the liturgy. 8. Pelagius dies during an outbreak of the plague, and the papal see lies vacant for more than seven months. 9. Tiberius chooses Maurice of Cappadocia as co-emperor; followed as in Schlauch by the story of Constance," P. Nicholson, "Chaucer Borrows from Gower: The Sources of the *Man of Law's Tale*," in Chaucer and Gower: Difference, Mutuality, Exchange ed. R. F. Yaeger (Victoria, BC: U. of Victoria P, 1991), 85-99, quote on 96, n. 13.

⁹⁸ For a summary see Mehl, 122-24.

returned to Rome she does not contact her father, who must be gravely concerned after receiving word about the massacre of the wedding party. An incest theme in an earlier version of the story, here suppressed, would help explain these narrative inconsistencies.

Another significant difference is the introduction of the Crescentia motif: the queen is framed by a rejected lover, although not by her brother-in-law. The incident is used to advantage by Gower, for whom the tale is an illustration of the dangers of envy and detraction.

b) John Gower

Gower includes the tale of Constance in his Confessio Amantis, a treatise on good governance, intended to advise England's leaders to gain control of their private lives in order to rule wisely and to maintain the social order.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁹ For the Life of Constance see Russell A. Peck, ed. 108-36. Peck is relatively easy to read, but he paraphrases parts of the text, especially the links between the tales. Where appropriate, I will therefore supplement his text with G. C. Macaulay, ed. The Complete Works of John Gower, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1910). Text quoted from Macaulay is marked with an "M".

Gower addressed the first edition to Richard II in 1390. By 1392, though, the young king was not only spending the public income freely and demanding tax increases to finance his expenses, but he also turned to dictatorial and draconian measures in order to secure them. This may have influenced Gower, in reformulating the dedication of the Confessio Amantis, to address it to the king's popular cousin Henry Bolingbroke, who seven years later usurped the throne from Richard and became Henry IV. The meaning of this new dedication has been much discussed. While Peck calls the revision farsighted, 495, Macaulay plays down its importance, arguing that Bolingbroke had been addressed in the first edition as well, that he was a member of the royal household, and that in 1392 there was no immediate animosity visible between the king and his cousin, xxi-xxvii.

introduction deplores the division between king and council, between empire and papacy, and even within the church: Pope Urban VI in Rome was recognized by the English, while Clement VII resided in Avignon, supported by the French. The author sees the roots for the breakdown of order not in the stars or fortune, but in human failure (Prol. 545-49).¹⁰⁰

The poem explores problems of and remedies for unruliness and divisiveness through the image of love. The Priest of Love (whose name, Genius, recalls the Roman de la Rose) to whom the narrator (known as Amans, or Lover) pretends to confess himself, ends up not so much speaking of love as preaching against sin (I, 239-41). He offers stories to illustrate each of the seven deadly sins, such as pride, envy, wrath, lust, and the healing effects of their virtuous opposites, such as humility, largesse, pity, and marital fidelity. The Lover's confession to Genius (and his instructions) thus becomes the Confessio Amantis of the title.

The story of Constance in Book II is intended to illustrate the dangers of Envy and Detraction: "For who so wol an other blame,/ He secheth ofte his oghne shame" (M. II, 579-80). It follows Trivet's plot very closely, although it omits the political negotiations about the fate of Jerusalem. Both

¹⁰⁰ For Gower, man is the microcosm and his missteps have cosmic implications: "And when this litel world mistorneth,/ The grete world al overtorneth" (Prol. 957-58). The more familiar formula in the Middle Ages was that man was the microcosm which reflected the macrocosm; see Leonard Barkan, Nature's Work of Art: The Human Body as the Image of the World (New Haven: Yale UP, 1975).

mothers-in-law personify the sin of envy, and the Crescentia episode, in which a rejected suitor falsely accuses Constance of murder, serves as example for the vice of detraction and its punishment.

As in Trivet, there is no incest in Gower's "Tale of Constance." This is not to say that Gower eschews incest; rather he uses another Book to illustrate its evils. It is in Book VIII that he emphasizes the need of human law to tame natural law (M, VIII, 145-47) and points out that some men don't respect kinship or religion:

Bot as a cock among the Hennes,
Or as a Stalon in the Fennes,
Which goth amonges al the Stod,
Riht so can he nomore good,
But takth what thing comth next to honde. (M, VIII, 159-63)

Gower argues that once the laws of marriage are regulated by canon law, there is no room for incest, and he illustrates the disastrous consequences of disobeying the laws through the examples of Caligula, Amon, Lot, and, especially, Apollonius of Tyre. The tale of Apollonius, derived from Tale 153 in the Gesta Romanorum, takes up approximately four-fifths of Book Eight, which is in its length seemingly as out of control as the sin of "lust" itself.¹⁰¹ And indeed, if one sees "lust" as a term for

¹⁰¹ The Gesta Romanorum were originally a collection of Latin tales praising "Roman deeds," and were later popularized in the vernacular

concupiscence in general, which includes not only sexual aspects, but also anger, greed, jealousy and idolatry, it seems all pervasive and hard to contain.¹⁰²

In Gower's version of Apollonius of Tyre, the Asian king Antioch loses his wife and rapes his daughter, who does not flee but continues to live with him in sin. Each time a prince asks for the daughter's hand in marriage, Antioch requires him to solve a riddle, and when he can't he is executed. One day, though, the Greek prince Apollonius finds the solution, which simultaneously reveals the incestuous relationship, and he has to flee Antiochus's wrath. He lives in exile and marries another princess. When news reaches them that Antiochus and his daughter have been struck dead by lightning, they return to Tyre. At sea, a storm arises and sends the young queen into labor. She is found lifeless after the birth of a daughter and is cast overboard in a casket with her gold and jewels. Her body is found on the shores of Ephesus and a physician is able to revive her. She then serves at the temple of Diana, the goddess of chastity. The grieving Apollonius places his daughter, Tharsia,

and appropriated by Christian priests for their own moralization. See the introduction to Charles Swan, trans., Gesta Romanorum, Entertaining Stories (London: Routledge, 1924) 1-71. For a comparison of different versions of Apollonius see Elizabeth Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1991).

¹⁰² For this wider definition of "lust" see Karma Lochrie, "The Language of the Flesh: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse," in Frantzen 115-40. The Middle Ages were preoccupied with three types of lust: "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life"; see Donald Howard The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966) 46-75, quote on 65.

in the care of friends in Sicily, and sails to other countries. When the girl is fourteen years old, her jealous foster mother orders her killed, but instead Tharsia is kidnapped by pirates, sold into slavery, and barely escapes sexual assault. Apollonius is told that his daughter has died and longs for death himself. Hearing of his grief, Tharsia's protector brings her to Apollonius in order to console him. We are not told what kind of consolation he had in mind, but Apollonius and his daughter chastely tell each other their woeful stories and soon recognize each other. Eventually Apollonius has a dream leading him to his wife, and the family is re-united.

Suchier believes that Apollonius is related to La Manekine, but Schlauch disagrees. She does point out, though, that: "the importance of Apollonius as a possible influence on Constance comes from the circumstance that it was known in England at the time when the Offa-Constance story was taking shape there. The wording of the first part of the Anglo-Saxon prose Apollonius does remind one of the beginning of La Manekine: the death of the Queen, the growing up of the princess, and the father's failure to marry her to one of her suitors; but the similarity, such as it is, ends there." She adds: "the alleged similarity of Constance's exposure at sea and the drifting of Apollonius' wife (supposedly dead) in her coffin, seems to me fortuitous."¹⁰³

Nevertheless, the story combines the motifs of incest,

¹⁰³ Schlauch, Chaucer's Constance 75, n. 22. Actually, there are no suitors for Joie mentioned in her story.

dispersal and reunion of a family, and a queen's rudderless sea voyage, together with an East-West motif. In addition, Apollonius's proper relationship with his daughter is juxtaposed to the unnatural intimacy between Antiochus and his daughter, just as in La Manekine the heroine's successful exogenous marriage is contrasted to her father's incestuous desire.

Gower gives no indication whether he saw any connection between the stories of Apollonius and Constance, but he seems either unaware or uninterested in the incest motif in The Life of Constance, as he does not shy away from the subject elsewhere. Clearly, he uses Constance's story to illustrate the vice of envy, and that of Apollonius to expound on the sin of lust.

c. Geoffrey Chaucer

In his introduction to the "Man of Law's Tale" (MLT) Chaucer refers to other tales of incest and seems to tease Gower for suppressing it in his Life of Constance.¹⁰⁴ The narrator proclaims that it is hard to find a tale that Chaucer, the author, has not told yet in one book or another, except for stories that include reference to incest:

"But certainly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
That loved her owene brother synfully-
Of swiche cursed stories I sey fy!-

¹⁰⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales in The Riverside Chaucer, gen. ed. Larry Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) 87-104.

Or ellis of Tyro Appollonius,
 How that the cursed kyng Antiochus
 Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,
 That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
 Whan he hir threw upon the pavement." (Intro. MLT 77-85)

The story of Canace's incest with her own brother - mentioned here in ll. 78-79 - is used by Gower in Book Three of the Confessio Amantis to illustrate the sin of Wrath.¹⁰⁵ In linking the stories of Canace, Apollonius, and Constance, Chaucer draws the reader's attention to the incest motif that is common to them, and connects it to his own version of the life of Constance. He also introduces the notion of incest with regard to the sultan's mother, whom he calls a second Semiramis, comparing her to an Eastern queen who was known not only for killing her husband and usurping his throne, but also for having an incestuous relationship with her son.¹⁰⁶

Incestuous desire may be the motif behind the animosity of Constance's second mother-in-law as well. At least her motivation for hating Constance seems dubious when Chaucer writes

¹⁰⁵ Gower presents her as a pitiful victim of her father's unbridled fury, and not, as Chaucer alludes, as a "wicked" example of lechery. Chaucer does in fact introduce the story of Canacee in "The Squire's Tale," 667-670, but breaks off as soon as he has mentioned the brother's interest in his sister.

¹⁰⁶ At the very least she possessively aims to hold her son in the clutches of paganism, thereby preventing a successful union between East and West; see also the comment by Kathleen Davis, "Time Behind the Veil: The Media, the Middle Ages, and Orientalism Now," in The Postcolonial Middle Ages, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's P, 2000, 105-22) quote on 117.

that: "her heart breaks" at the thought of her son's wedding ("Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast atwo"; MLT 697).

Constance's relationship with her father at the end of the story is likewise tinged with the suspicion of incest. She ends up twice "on the floor before her father" (MLT 1104 and 1153), an image possibly designed to link her to incestuous Canacee lying before her father "upon the pavement" (MLT 85). More noteworthy still is her remarkably close relationship with her father after Alle's death. They are devoted to each other "till death does them part": "They lyven alle, and nevere asunder wende;/ Til deeth departeth hem, this lyf they lede." (MLT 1158-59).

In his "Man of Law's Tale" Chaucer exaggerates the narrative strategies of framing, containing, excluding, and silencing and relates them to present day conditions. Constance is given in marriage against her will and dreads leaving friends and family. The narrator proclaims this to be the general lot of women: to be given in marriage by their parents without consultation and to remain dependent on their fathers and husbands. "Wommen are born to thraldom and penance/ And to been under mannes governance" (286-87). Chaucer's Constance has no voice of her own and spends most of her time in tears.¹⁰⁷

Chaucer's narrator, a sergeant of the law, claims to have heard the tale from a merchant, just as the Saracen merchants

¹⁰⁷ For the lack of agency and the emphasis on "pitee" in Chaucer as opposed to Gower see Winthrop Wetherbee, "Constance and the World in Chaucer and Gower," John Gower: Recent Readings, ed. R. F. Yeager (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989) 65-93.

hear the Christian gospel from Constance and then carry the story of her beauty to the Sultan. Merchants trade goods as well as stories and Constance herself becomes an object of trade. She is, as Carolyn Dinshaw writes, "traded between pagan shores just as the tale itself (along with other merchandise) has been traded across the seas; she is a blank, a cypher, an empty sign, exchanged between men in the linguistic and commercial transactions that constitute patriarchal social structure."¹⁰⁸ Constance's passivity pertains mainly to Chaucer's version, whereas in Trivet and, to a lesser degree in Gower, the heroine shows signs of courage and is active as a missionary.¹⁰⁹ She is unsuccessful in the East despite all her riches, and carries more conviction when she arrives as a poor outcast in England, validating poverty and spirituality over wealth and power. In Chaucer she appears above all as the long-suffering Christian wife, a cousin to his "Griselda," but with a different family situation.¹¹⁰ The heroine's helplessness in Chaucer underlines her dependence on men, including her father.

¹⁰⁸ Carolyn Dinshaw, Chaucer's Sexual Poetics (Madison: U of Wisconsin 3, 1989) 25. Her formulation obviously refers to a statement by Claude Levi-Strauss, see p. 121, n. 213.

¹⁰⁹ For an extensive comparison of the three versions see E. Luecke, "Das Leben der Constance bei Trivet, Gower und Chaucer," Anglia 14 (1892): 77-112 and 149-85.

¹¹⁰ Both women can also be read as images for mankind suffering for Eve's sin, and as emblem of Mary, who through her patient suffering contributed to wo(man)'s redemption, as pointed out by Sheila Delany, "Womanliness in the *Man of Law's Tale*," in her Writing Woman: Women Writers and Women in Literature, Medieval to Modern (New York: Schocken, 1983) 36-46. While Petrarch might have seen Griselda that way, Chaucer has clearly humanized his heroine, making the reader all the more aware of the injustice of her fate.

Comparative Summary

a. Idiosyncrasies of La Belle Hélène

Among the tales reviewed, several features appear only in La Belle Hélène. Some of them exist in other analogues,¹¹¹ but it is remarkable how many of them come together in La Belle Hélène. It is the combination of these elements, shown in the table on p. 74, that underlies my cultural reading of that text.

- In her exile, the mother is separated from her children (as she is in the legend of Saint Eustachius and in the Clementine Recognitions).

- There are two episodes of incest, not just one.

- The exiled queen does not accept a comfortable refuge, but chooses poverty instead.

- Only in in La Belle Hélène and La Manekine do the heroines suffer from mutilation and are healed through a miracle.

- Saracens are mentioned in many of the stories, but La Belle Hélène is the only tale to develop the fate of the heroine simultaneously with the progress of religious wars and to describe their battles in epic detail.

On the other hand, it becomes apparent that the question of succession, which Margaret Schlauch viewed as central to the story of the Accused Queen, does not play an obvious or prominent role in these stories, except in La Mankine.

Before embarking on further scrutiny of the heroine's body and its experience with incest, mutilation, deprivation, and healing, two features bear further discussion due to their symbolic implications:

- The names of people and places, which vary from one story to another, and

- The importance of religious wars in La Belle Hélène, which are unique to that tale, and distinguish the signification of Hélène's suffering from that of the other queens, as will become obvious in chapter V.

¹¹¹ See Roussel, Contes de geste 73-132.

Comparison of selected motifs in *La Belle Hélène* and Five Analogues

	<u>Offa</u>	<u>Manekine</u>	<u>Mai & Beaflo</u>	<u>Emare</u>	<u>Constance</u>	<u>Hélène</u>
home	York	Hungary	--	Rome	Rome	Constantinople
husband's country	Angles	Scotland	Mailand	Scotland	England	England
children	several	1 son	1 son	1 son	1 son	twin sons
separation from child	--	--	--	--	--	yes
succession	--	yes	--	--	--	--
mother-in-law	--	1	1	1	2	1
incest	1	1	1	1	--	2
mutilation	children	yes	--	--	--	yes
miracle healing	children	yes	--	--	--	yes
voluntary poverty	--	--	--	--	--	yes
Saracens	--	--	yes	yes	yes	yes
battle descriptions of religious wars	--	--	--	--	--	yes

b. Meaning of Names and Places

Throughout the Middle Ages special significance has been attributed to names, as people attempted to explain and order the world and the names given to things etymologically.¹¹² Tracing names can, therefore, not only help to investigate connections between tales, but also to understand possible political implications, and to deepen the symbolic reading of a text.

Names and settings differ widely among the stories. The heroine is called H el ene, Constance, Beafior, or Emare; the incestuous father is the king of Rome or of Hungary, of Russia or Constantinople, of France or of England; and his name also varies from tale to tale. On the other hand, some names recur in several stories, especially Constance, Constantin, H el ene (Helayne, Elaine), though they may relate to different personae or even to places. St. Clement, Tours and St. Martin appear in two of the tales, as does the name Lois. It is possible that in some instances these parallels indicate a source connection between tales, though none has been proven conclusively so far.

The location of incest in England or in France respectively seems to reflect political sympathies during the Hundred Years War. On the other hand, Hungary may, not unlike Constantinople, have been intended as a symbolic place at the margin between East and West, a country associated with the Huns and their invasions,

¹¹² See Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae Sive Origines*. Ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (1911; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962).

a place where the fantastic and the abnormal could be placed and then contemplated from a safe distance.¹¹³ It seems more likely, though, that the young princess from Hungary alluded to the historical life of St. Elizabeth who hailed from Hungary. She had married the Count of Thuringia and early on distinguished herself through her acts of charity. After her husband's death on a crusade in 1227, she was treated miserably by her brothers-in-law, renounced her inheritance, lived in poverty, and became famous for her care of the sick and destitute.¹¹⁴ She could certainly have served as a model for the tale of a young queen who was falsely accused and driven into exile.

In some of the stories the protagonists change their names. In La Manekine and in Emare the heroine's name figuratively announces her state of being: she is happy and/or luminous at birth, but she goes into exile sad, outcast, and/or maimed.¹¹⁵ As in the fairy tales of "Allerleirauh" and "Peau

¹¹³ Louis Karl calls Hungary "un pays entre l'Orient et l'Occident" 164, and the historic St. Martin, who was born there, was indeed torn between the old laws of the Romans and the new ways of Christianity. For associations with that country see further Z. J. Kosztolnyik's entry on "Hungary" in John Block Friedman, Kristen Mossler Figg, Gregory G. Guzman, and Scott D. Westrem, eds., Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia (New York: Garland, 2000) 264-67.

¹¹⁴ Louis Karl connects Hungary mainly with the Dit de Florence de Rome, and also traces a connection of the names Esmeré and Aimeri to Hungary, see "Florence de Rome et la vie de deux Saints de Hongrie," Revue des Langues Romanes 53 (1909): 163-80. For the differentiation between the versions of Florence de Rome see Axel Wallenskoeld, Florence de Rome, chanson d'aventure du premier quart du XIIIe siècle, 2 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907-09), and also his Le conte de la femme chaste convoitée par son beau-frère: étude de littérature comparée, (Helsinki: Société de littérature finnoise, 1907).

¹¹⁵ This is true also in Lion de Bourges, where she changes her name

d'Ane," the new name serves as a disguise. This may link Joie and Emare to those fairies, who enter the realm of humans but ask that their identity be kept hidden, as Mélusine or the love of Marie de France's Lanval.¹¹⁶

In La Belle Hélène name changes relate to Christian baptism and conversion. Hélène, Christian since birth and constant as *ecclesia* herself does not change her name and never wavers in her faith. Her true identity cannot be changed by outer misfortune, although she remains anonymous in exile. She leaves Constantinople and ends her life in Rome, indicating the journey of the "true" faith towards the eternal city, away from the Eastern church. Her sons, on the other hand, grow up in the wild, as the Saracens grow up in a religious wilderness, and like them, they acquire their true Christian identity and, appropriately, new names through baptism. This is also true for the Saracen Graibault, who receives the name Lois in baptism, while his daughter Clariande, already secretly believing in Christ before her official conversion, retains her name. In La Belle Hélène, an epic of crusades, the changes of names are thus one more device to underline the importance of conversion and they even reveal who receives a truly new Christian identity in baptism.

from Joieuse to Tristouse, see Lion de Bourges, eds. W.W. Kibler, J. - L. Picherit, and T.S. Fenster, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1980).

¹¹⁶ For Mélusine see p. 56, n 93. For Lanval see Les Lais de Marie de France, ed. Jean Rychner (Paris: Champion, 1966).

c. Role of Religion and Saracens

In Offa I, the husband of the young queen is called away by wars, but these are tribal not religious wars. Crusades and Saracens figure prominently in other parts of Matthew of Paris's work, but they do not pertain to the story of Offa I.¹¹⁷

In Emare the cloth for the heroine's dress conjures up the mysterious Orient and we hear of past and present wars against the infidel. Emare's husband has to help the King of France against the Saracens, just as Beafloer's husband must aid his uncle, the king of Spain, against them, but these wars seem to serve above all to separate the husband from his wife and to propel the narrative. In La Manekine the husband does not even leave for war, but for tournaments on the continent.

In the Life of Constance the Saracens are open-minded merchants who report to a benevolent sultan.¹¹⁸ The Saracen enemy is the sultanness, against whom the Roman admiralty sails in revenge after her treachery, but not with any missionary intention. Jerusalem is firmly in the hands of the infidel, and

¹¹⁷ For their importance in the Chronica Majora see Lewis chapter 4.

¹¹⁸ Referring to the similarities between Christianity and Islam in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale* Susan Shibamoto argues that the author uses a "rhetoric of proximity," to reflect on antifeminism and fear of heresy at home rather than conjure up dangers from abroad; see "Worlds Apart: Orientalism, Antifeminism, and Heresy in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*," Exemplaria, 8 (1996): 59-96. She also argues for Chaucer's antifeminism in "Mohammed, Courtly Love, and the Myth of Western Heterosexuality," Medieval Feminist Newsletter 16(1993): 27-32. I have no doubt that Chaucer uses his stories in order to point out problems in England, but am not convinced of his antifeminism, see p. 89. n. 147.

only negotiations can bring its return.

The settings of these five tales stand in marked contrast to La Belle Hélène, in which the Christians are constantly engaged in wars against the infidel. The fighting scenes are described as vividly as in other, more secular, chansons de geste: we hear of Saracens sliced in half, of noses and arms being cut off, and we even see the hundred-year-old pope riding into battle.¹¹⁹ Christian heroes are led into captivity to be crucified or rescued by Saracen princesses, either way adding to the glory of Christianity. There is no doubt that the holy wars are as important as the fate of the heroine. They are given equal weight and space in that epic, and battle descriptions take turns with scenes from the life of Hélène. The motifs concerning the heroine's experiences thus have to be understood in close connection with these wars, as we will see in chapter V.

¹¹⁹ Fol. 51v, 3838-39 "Et ly bons apostoles s'est armes a bandon/ Il avait bien cent ans a icelle saison"; And the good pope armed himself plenty/ He was one hundred years old at that season.

III. The Body as Theoretical Framework

A. Anthropology and the Symbolic Use of the Body

All of the analogues reviewed exhibit one or several of the following motifs: incest, exile (or flight), mutilation, and miraculous healing. In La Belle Hélène, all four of them are present, and incest even occurs twice; the second time it is prevented through the exorcism of a pagan spirit. It is my contention that the doubling of the incest motif and its connection to paganism both provide important keys for a reading of this poem, namely the equation of physical with religious pollution.

Starting with the old definition that "dirt is matter out of place," Mary Douglas has defined pollution as that which does not belong in a predefined order, that which is anomalous or even ambiguous.¹²⁰ Pollution thus requires the existence of order. Order can be defined on a private and on a public level; as anthropologist, she investigates its meaning in communities.

In any society, common standards are developed that define what is acceptable, and what should be rejected. There are various ways to deal with anomalies: they can be ignored, suppressed, removed, or one can attribute a sense of danger to them. This danger is usually described as a threat of

¹²⁰ See Douglas, Purity and Danger 36; see p. 2, n. 4.

metaphysical retribution.¹²¹

Definitions of pollution are tied to the supernatural in order to buttress the social rules in a community: "any control system, since it has to be made reasonable (be justified, validated or legitimated as Weber put it), must appeal to the ultimate principles about the nature of man and of the cosmos."¹²² Pollution beliefs help to uphold the social order especially in areas where there is no binding communal agreement and they are designed to substitute or complement other mechanisms of retribution.¹²³

Taboos are generally mapped onto the body, because in defining rules of pollution (and rituals of purification), the body serves as the analogue to society. Society with its different "members" and "organs" is likened to the living organism of the body and, vice versa, the body becomes the emblem for society, which has to protect its inner organs, joints, and integrity. Both society and the body are complex systems with internal structures and external boundaries; boundaries that have to be negotiated and protected if their respective structures are to survive: "The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries, which are

¹²¹ Douglas, Purity and Danger 40.

¹²² See Douglas, Natural Symbols 80. For the use of the supernatural as an instrument of social control she refers to E. E. Evans-Pritchard's research on the Azande, Douglas Purity and Danger 1.

¹²³ Douglas, Purity and Danger 134.

threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The functions of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body."¹²⁴

Douglas suggests "that when rituals express anxiety about the body's orifices the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a hard-pressed minority group." She cites the example of the Israelites, who "were always in their history a hard-pressed minority. In their belief all the bodily issues were polluting, blood, pus, excreta, semen etc. The threatened boundaries of their body politic would be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity, and purity of the physical body."¹²⁵

Besides fear of outside attack, fear of usurpation of power from the inside can likewise lead to strict pollution rules. Douglas finds that a rigid social system tends to generate strict rules about the use of the body, which means that the use of its parts, fluids, and orifices will be closely regulated.¹²⁶ She

¹²⁴ Douglas, Purity and Danger 116.

¹²⁵ Both quotes in this paragraph are from Douglas, Purity and Danger 125.

¹²⁶ Douglas, Natural Symbols 84.

observes that "... the more value people set on social constraints, the more value they set on symbols of bodily control."¹²⁷ The rigidity of a system depends on two main parameters: the amount of control exerted by the social system on the one hand, and the development of individual thought and speech on the other. Totalitarian dictatorship is at one end of the extreme, and open democracy at the other.¹²⁸ The more rigid a system, the tighter is the control of the body.

Translated to textual analysis, the crossing of boundaries between inside and outside of the body, for example by eating, or nursing, or, more blatantly, by rape or mutilation, can be read as potential endangerment of the political stability of the community presented in the text. The role of the body, its boundaries and orifices in literature has been described by Michael Bakhtin in language strikingly similar to that of Douglas. In his analysis of the grotesque body in Rabelais he writes:

All these convexities and orifices have a common characteristic; it is within them that the confines between bodies and between body and the world are overcome: there is an exchange and an interorientation. This is why the main events of the life of the grotesque body, the acts of

¹²⁷ Douglas, Natural Symbols 16.

¹²⁸ Douglas, Natural Symbols 50; see her diagram 3.

the bodily drama, take place in this sphere. Eating, drinking, defecation, and other elimination... as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body - all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body.¹²⁹

In order to maintain the status quo, these physical orifices and boundaries have, therefore, to be watched closely, and any overstepping of the "proper," and conventional boundaries, such as by the grotesque body, leads to the possibility of "carnival," i.e. of turning the world "upside down," and a challenge to the established order.

Since the early 1980's New Historicism has employed the understanding of transgression as a threat in the physical as well as in the cultural sense mainly for exploring Renaissance literature.¹³⁰ Students of medieval texts soon followed suit, and especially feminist scholars have reviewed representations of "bodies," their boundaries as well as their characterization, as

¹²⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984) 317.

¹³⁰ For examples of New Historicist readings of Renaissance texts, see Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980); Peter Stallybrass and Allen White, eds., The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986); D. S. Kastan and P. Stallybrass, eds., Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Louis Montrose, The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996).

expressions of cultural conditions.¹³¹ Peggy McCracken applies Douglas's theory to medieval courtly romance and its descriptions of transgression of cultural taboos, such as incest or adultery. She observes: "threats to the political stability of the court and to the boundaries that establish and maintain it are figured in the ritualized restriction and transgression of the body."¹³²

The society portrayed in La Belle Hélène is clearly under attack from the outside: the poem repeatedly describes the Saracens besieging Rome. Besides the threat from the infidels, the church had also been dealing with opposition from the inside. The rivalry for spiritual leadership between the pope in Rome and the patriarch in Constantinople had caused a widening rift between east and west from the eighth century onward.¹³³

Following Douglas's insights, this thesis argues that concern for the survival of Christianity as well as for the integrity of the "true" faith is expressed through a bodily metaphor, namely the threat of incest. This image, accordingly, occurs twice in the poem: once in connection with a Saracen father, and once by the king of Constantinople.

¹³¹ For new, cultural, readings of medievalist texts see Brownlee The New Medievalism, and also Michael Bentley, ed., Companion to Historiography (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), which traces the ideological influence of the writer and his/her time on the representation of events and people in history. Feminist readings are discussed in the next section, III B.

¹³² Peggy McCracken "The Body Politic and the Queen's Adulterous Body in French Romance," in Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature, ed. L. Lomperis and S. Stanbury (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993), 38-64, quote on 40.

¹³³ See IV C.

Douglas's concept of seeing the body as a symbol for society helps to focus my exploration of the text on four motifs which mark both H  l  ne's body and her life: (threat of) pollution, mutilation, deprivation, and restitution. I will address them using this vocabulary and in this order in chapter V, "The Text of the Female Body."

B. Gender Theory and the Female as Image

In La Belle H  l  ne, the tale of the accused female is thematically tightly interwoven with the framework of the crusades. Not only do these wars initially launch the events and lead to the wedding of the pope's niece to the king of Constantinople; they also offer Antoine the opportunity to bribe the pope into consenting to an incestuous marriage with H  l  ne, causing her to flee. When the heroine seems finally settled in a happy and socially acceptable marriage, another onslaught by the infidels calls her husband away. While on the one hand the crusades determine and, at times, threaten H  l  ne's life, on the other hand the search for the heroine provides the narrative impulse that motivate her male relatives to continue their fights until Jerusalem, Castres, and Flanders are in the hands of the Christians.

In order to investigate the symbolism of the female figure and her physical experience, we have to understand how her body functions in the "male" crusading setting of the narrative and in its historical context. This is only proper, since, as Peggy

McCracken put it: "...if we wish to understand how woman is constructed in medieval romance through the metaphoric use of her body, ... [we need] an interrogation of how the ... female body defines and is defined by the social and symbolic orders in which it participates."¹³⁴ This approach requires a reflection on the meaning of gender and on its cultural construction.

Since Foucault's History of Sexuality, gender has been seen as a cultural construct, the definition of which changes over time and among cultures.¹³⁵ Literature takes part in the construction of gender and literary analysis helps uncover "how the perceptions of sexual divisions in particular historical contexts have been culturally and socially constructed."¹³⁶

Referring to Mary Douglas's notion, "that the human body is always treated as an image of society and [that]... there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension," Thomas Laqueur relates changes in the medical image of the female body in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to concurrent evolutions in society and ideology.¹³⁷ In a similar vein, the feminist historian Joan

¹³⁴ Peggy McCracken, The Body Politic 40.

¹³⁵ Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 3 vols. 1980-86).

¹³⁶ See E. Muir and G. Ruggiero, eds., Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective, trans. M. Galucci (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990) introduction x.

¹³⁷ See Thomas Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of reproductive Biology," in C. Gallagher and T. Laqueur, eds., The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century

Wallach Scott investigates how "history's representations of the past help construct gender for the present," and shows how language and writing (including the writing of history) contribute to the creation of gender expectations by "expressing the desires of dominant groups in society."¹³⁸

Judith Butler traces the influence of language on the formation of gender and demonstrates how the cultural components in the ideals of femininity and masculinity express and influence society's demands on and responses to each.¹³⁹ Gender divisions may appear to be based on biological fact, but definitions of the body and its gender are never quite stable, because they are subject to different kinds of discourse - such as medical, religious, and legal -, which frequently are at odds with each other.¹⁴⁰ Both body and gender are, moreover, influenced by definitions of race, age, or class, and their intersections with

(Berkeley: U of California P, 1987) 1-41. He quotes Douglas Natural Symbols 70, on 4.

¹³⁸ Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 2.

¹³⁹ See Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990), and Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex" (New York: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁴⁰ For the Body in various types of discourse see Miri Rubin, "The Body, Whole and Vulnerable, in Fifteenth-Century England," in Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996) 19-28. Various examples of ambiguous constructions of medieval bodies are given in Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, James Schultz eds., Constructing Medieval Sexuality (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997).

notions of gender, as pointed out by Steven F. Kruger.¹⁴¹ Any definition of gender is thus multifaceted, rather than monolithic.

The cultural dimension in the definition of gender colors the way we view -and writers depict - not only people, but also activities and inanimate things as gendered. Carolyn Dinshaw in her analysis of Chaucer's "Adam Sciveyn" makes the reader aware of the implications of such matters as seeing the act of writing as male, and the sheet of paper that is written upon, as female.¹⁴² It is an apt illustration of how gender can stand symbolically for an imbalance in the distribution of power and agency between the sexes. In the words of Joan W. Scott, "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."¹⁴³

The investigation of gender relations as an image of imbalances in the distribution of power and agency has gained momentum since the 1980's, as can be seen in the work of Linda Lomperis, Miri Rubin, Theresa Coletti, and others.¹⁴⁴ The

¹⁴¹ The overlapping of definitions of race, religion and gender is a subject explored by Steven F. Kruger; see for example "Conversion and Medieval Sexual, Religious, and Racial Categories," in Karma Lochrie, Constructing Medieval Sexuality 158-79.

¹⁴² Dinshaw, Chaucer's Sexual Poetics, introduction.

¹⁴³ Scott 42. Obviously gender is not the only way of establishing hierarchies of power, and in this sense feminism has opened up the field for investigations on other marginalized groups, as pointed out in Elaine Showalter, see p. 4 n. 10.

¹⁴⁴ See for example Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds., Feminist

combination of feminism and cultural investigation has also guided Sheila Delany, as is evident from her Writing Woman to the more recent analysis of the fifteenth-century work of Osbern Bokenham for its gender implications and political context.¹⁴⁵

When analyzing literary texts for their implied cultural statements, we cannot regard them as mirror images of their socio-historical conditions. Penny Schine Gold argues that "the relationship of an image to the reality external to it is more complex than simple reflection; images can also embody fears, fantasies, and wishes."¹⁴⁶ Elaine Tuttle Hansen, for example, sees the female characters in Chaucer more as an expression of the author's own anxiety over the artist's marginalization in society than as a true championing of female equality.¹⁴⁷ While I feel that her language is exaggeratedly hostile in order to topple the "master" from his pedestal, I agree with Sheila Fisher and Janet Halley that female characters may at times present more

Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993); Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin, eds., Framing Medieval Bodies (New York: Manchester UP, 1994); and Lori Hope Levkovitz, ed., Textual Bodies: Changing Boundaries of Literary Presentation (Albany: SUNY P, 1997).

¹⁴⁵ Sheila Delany, Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹⁴⁶ The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985) Preface xviii.

¹⁴⁷ See Elaine Tuttle Hansen, "The Feminization of Men in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*," Fisher and Halley, 51-70, and also her "Fearing for Chaucer's Good Name", Exemplaria 2 (1990): 23-36. Contrary to Hansen, I see Chaucer's expressing concern that there be a balance between the sexes, for example his gendering of the bird imagery in the "Squire's Tale" on the one hand, and the "Manciple's Tale" on the other.

an expression of male preoccupation than a reflection of reality and that "...in the medieval and early modern periods, perhaps more than at any other time, the production of literature was a fundamentally male "homotextual" activity: one in which male writings referred to, manipulated, and projected desire upon other men and other men's writings as much, if not more, than they claimed to represent the extraliterary world and the women in it."¹⁴⁸

In La Belle Hélène, the gender divide is stereotyped and normative - men fight, women don't; men don't act like women, and women who act like men are negative characters. Despite this general homogeneity of gender, there is still a certain differentiation in the "masculinities" and the "femininities" presented.¹⁴⁹ It is true that all the men are fighters, but some

¹⁴⁸ Fisher and Halley, introduction 4. Another group of authors expresses the same thought: "Beginning with the idea that textual inscriptions in the Middle Ages have more to do with the masculine consciousness that produced them than with the female reality they purport to describe, scholars began to read 'woman' in the text as a textual sign rather than a historical entity", see Burns, Kay, Krueger, and Solterer, quote on 230.

There also existed women writers throughout the Middle Ages; see, for example, Peter Dronke, Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (†203) to Marguerite Porete (†1310) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1984). The impact of women's gender on their writing is the subject of Jane Chance, ed., Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1996), which also provides an overview of selected women authors from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries, xii-xv. The discussion continues, to what extent women writers in the Middle Ages were inculcated with a masculine value system, and to what degree they could find their own voices.

¹⁴⁹ Various types of masculinities are explored in Clare A. Lees, ed. Medieval masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994). For a deeper probing into such issues as the performative nature, construction and fluidity of gender, specifically masculinity, see Dawn Hadley, ed. Masculinity in Medieval Europe (London and New York: Longman, 1999).

are more energetic than others.

The clergy is just as active in battle as other warriors, be they Christian or Saracen. In fact, the pope, though one hundred years old, still leads the army. The archbishop of Tours, and his protégé, the future Saint Martin, do not hesitate to join in either, although the historical Saint Martin (ca. 316-397) was reluctant to serve in the Roman army and was criticized for joining it in the first place.¹⁵⁰ Converted Saracens generally fight for Christianity with heightened intensity, as does Coustant, formerly the Saracen king Robastre of Bordeaux, whose name is supposed to indicate how his prowess "costs" the infidels their lives. Aumery, the baptized king of Scotland, spearheads the attempts to conquer both Jerusalem and the fortified city of Castres. When taken captive, he refuses to save his life by abjuring his Christian faith and dies a martyr's death on a cross, duplicating the image of Christ more closely than anyone else in the poem.

Of all the men, Martin's twin brother Brice is the least aggressive although he, too, participates in battle and thinks - briefly - of avenging his mother's (presumed) death. A vegetarian since his youth, his intention is to become a monk, and he has to be encouraged to marry a Saracen princess in order to win his freedom.

¹⁵⁰ The changing image of Saint Martin is discussed by Sherry L. Reames, "Saint Martin of Tours in the 'Legenda Aurea' and Before," Viator 12 (1981): 131-46.

Among the females, H el ene's mother-in-law Marguerite represents the trespasser. Plotting to have her daughter-in-law killed and her own son poisoned, she is likened to the devil (1293) and, as the text says, "a bad woman is worse than a man in anger" ("Pis vault le mal femme que l'omme plain d'outrage" [5310]). While H el ene has news for her husband related by the count of Gloucester, Marguerite arrogates Gloucester's and the king's male voices when she falsifies their letters. She also has enough strength and resolve to stab a priest to death and then throw his corpse out of a window (2716). While she is not a Saracen and is never explicitly called a "manly" woman, she certainly embodies neither Christian nor female virtues. Rather she can be seen as a deterrent and a warning against women assuming too much (male) power. In this she resembles the Saracen mother-in-law in the Life of Constance who turns her son's wedding feast into a massacre, and whose gender Chaucer questions by calling her a "virago" (MLT, 359).

The text, then, presents the reader with a clear-cut gender divide, ostensibly based on biological difference. This agrees with Christian beliefs: God created woman from (and after) man, which was interpreted to mean that man was the head of the family. A clear division between the roles of men and women was seen as "natural" and "God-given." "Gender identity reinforced biological characteristics in mainstream theology in an effort to

minimize the ambiguity of the body."¹⁵¹ The interests of the church coincided in this area with those of the secular ruling class, since an unambiguous definition of gender roles preserved the patriarchal order, which could not "tolerate fluid boundaries for the body, because they abrogate social conventions threatening patriarchal authority...."¹⁵² Gender ambiguity, such as homosexuality or cross dressing, is not even contemplated in La Belle H el ene. During the crusades a clear gender division also served the interest of the *ecclesia militans*, which recruited men for war against the infidels, and expected women to remain faithful to their husbands and administer the property at home without usurping their place.

It seems noteworthy that the parents of saints are among the more peace loving characters: Ludiane, the least forward of the Saracens, and Brice, the least belligerent of the warriors, engender Saint Brice, and the long-suffering H el ene is the mother of Brice and of Saint Martin.¹⁵³ This may possibly be an attempt to connect the spiritual side of Christianity to sainthood in this otherwise bellicose environment.

In La Belle H el ene, Saracen women are given more agency than Christian ladies. Ludiane asks the reluctant Brice to marry her, Clariande rules Bavaria and even risks war in rejecting a

¹⁵¹ Stephen Nichols, "Deflections of the Body in the Old French Lay," Stanford French Review 19 (1990): 27-50, quote on 41.

¹⁵² Nichols 45.

¹⁵³ Although Henry is Martin's father, the poem clearly emphasizes the lineage of the mother.

worthy Christian suitor, and Plaisance runs a pilgrims' hostel while in exile.¹⁵⁴ Hélène, on the other hand, humbly works as a washerwoman for her living, is always in flight, and frequently depends on begging for her food. Similarly, other Christian women who come to her aid distinguish themselves less through actions than through their martyr-like acceptance of their fates, such as death by fire.¹⁵⁵

While the sexuality of the Saracen ladies is somewhat questionable, Hélène adheres strictly to the virtues of virginity and then marital fidelity and chastity.¹⁵⁶ If we accept Douglas's theory that the borders of a community are symbolically represented through the ritualized protection of the integrity of the physical body, it becomes apparent how this is particularly apt for the female body. If an "invasion" through adultery, rape, or incest stands for one of the possible transgressions against the social order, it could lead to disastrous consequences for the community, as witnessed in the Arthurian romance. Attacks on the female body thus become a taboo, guarded by ritualized sanctions. This is especially true for the

¹⁵⁴ For an interpretation of their independence see V E.

¹⁵⁵ Both Hélène's Byzantine maid and Gloucester's niece die in this way, see the plot outline in I B 2.

¹⁵⁶ The emphasis on Hélène's chastity is heightened when read against the stories of some famously promiscuous women at sea, such as Alatiel in Boccaccio's Decameron, trans. Mark Musa and Peter Bondanella (New York: Norton, 1982), second Day, seventh tale. Marie l'Egyptienne also has sex with every man on board during her trip from Alexandria to the Holy Land; see Peter F. Dembrowski, ed. La Vie de Sainte Marie L'Egyptienne: versions en ancien et en moyen français (Geneva: Droz,

body of a queen, which represents not only her private life, but also the public body politic.¹⁵⁷

C. Theology and the Body in the Late Middle Ages

1. The Body of Christ

The connection between physical integrity and cosmological unity, which Douglas examines with regard to pollution taboos, is apparent also in Christian theology.¹⁵⁸ Central to the Christian doctrine of salvation are the themes of incarnation, fragmentation, and redemption - all exemplified by the body of Christ, who saved man from eternal damnation through his physical birth, martyrdom, and resurrection.¹⁵⁹ While Christian doctrine addresses foremost cosmic and metaphysical concerns, the church never lost sight of the social implications of its teachings, as

1977). See more on the construction of Saracen sexuality in V E.

¹⁵⁷ The concept of the duality of the sovereign's body is investigated in Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology (1957; Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997). For its application to the queen see Peggy McCracken, The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature (Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania P, 1998).

¹⁵⁸ For the cultural signification of the body, its sexuality and mortality in early Christianity see Peter Brown, The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity (New York: Columbia UP, 1988).

¹⁵⁹ For the role of the body in the Old Testament and the change of its message in the New Testament see Elaine Scarry: "just as the Old Testament act of wounding is explicitly presented as a 'sign', so the New Testament act of healing is explicitly presented as a 'sign': the human body is in each the site for the analogical verification of the existence and authority of God, but the alterations are almost always now [in the New Testament] in the direction of recovery," The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 213.

its persecution of other faiths and its rulings on marriage and confession attest.¹⁶⁰

Several analyses of medieval life in England show how the spiritual tenet of fragmentation and redemption also proved useful as a means of social control. Peter Travis, in his study of the Corpus Christi plays, centers attention on the polyvalence of the body, differentiating five levels of bodily meaning - cosmic, economic, political, physical, and social, - which he sees all addressed, though not without conflict, in the Mystery Cycles.¹⁶¹ Merwyn James reviews the late medieval Corpus Christi pageants to show the use of Christ as a means for skillful social mediation. Referring to Douglas, he demonstrates how the theological theme of the resurrected Christ re-united with the heavenly father and with his followers, served as image for a

¹⁶⁰ The inquisition, besides cleansing the church from "impure elements", also increased its power and wealth; annual confession, made obligatory by the Fourth Lateran Council and propagated as a means of purifying the soul, also constituted an astute instrument of social control. The interest of the church in restricting marriages between noble houses in the twelfth century is shown by Georges Duby, Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages, trans. Jane Dunnett (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994). Huguette Legros, "Parenté Naturelle, Alliance, Parenté Spirituelle: de l'Inceste à la Sainteté," SENEFIANCE 26 (1986): 511-48 sees La Manekine and La Belle Hélène as expressions of the resulting tensions between the secular and the religious authorities. For church rulings on heresy and the sacraments see the pertinent entries in The New Catholic Encyclopedia 17 vols. (New York: McGrawhill 1967-89). The development of the doctrine on marriage between the eleventh and fourteenth century is treated in the contribution by G. LeBras to the entry "Mariage" in Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amman (Paris: n.p., 1927) vol. 9, pt. 2, 2123-2317.

¹⁶¹ Peter Travis, "The Semiotics of Christ's Body in the English Cycles," in Approaches to Teaching Medieval Drama, ed. R. K. Emmerson (New York: Modern Language Association, 1990) 67-78. For the polyvalence of "bodily discourse" and resulting ambiguities see also Miri Rubin, The Body; see p. 86, n. 137.

socio-political strategy of conflict solving and unification among guilds in the medieval community.¹⁶² Sarah Beckwith also investigates the significance of Christ's body in late medieval social practices and religious texts. She focuses on the malleability of the symbol and its fluctuations in meaning with changes in its political, cultural, and social context.¹⁶³ She criticizes James's (and Douglas's) functionalist approach as too static, and asks for a more nuanced, dynamic view of ritualization, with greater emphasis on relationships and tensions.¹⁶⁴ Beckwith focuses on the social and political division actually resulting from the Corpus Christi plays and sees less resolution of conflict, whereas Merwyn emphasizes unification as the social strategy intended with those plays. He does mention the tensions between guilds during the organisation of the plays but feels that, where the plays were successful, they ultimately accommodated conflicting interests and also incorporated social change. Despite their differences, both authors do treat the body of Christ as emblematic of the community in which it is revered.

¹⁶² See Merwyn James, "Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town," Past and Present 98 (1983): 3-29.

¹⁶³ Sarah Beckwith, Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). She also addresses tensions arising between Christ's body as a private, religious image, and its function as a public, communal symbol.

¹⁶⁴ Sarah Beckwith "Ritual, Theater, and Space in the York Corpus Christi Cycle," in Hanawalt and Wallace 63-86. Douglas was, in fact, well aware of the fluidity of society and its values, see Purity and Danger 5.

Interest in the body and its representations had grown since Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Over the centuries, his affective emphasis on Christ's humanity led to an increasing attachment to His bodily appearance and suffering. The new focus on the physicality of Christ and the martyrs was reflected in art and literature, as well as sermons.

In the visual arts, change emerged by the late 1300's, when the Christ child was no longer shown as the stern young Pantocrator but as a little boy playing in his mother's lap.¹⁶⁵ The interest in the body of Christ and the increasingly open depictions of His genitals have been seen by Leo Steinberg as a sign of heightened interest in His sexuality in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.¹⁶⁶ Brigitte Cazelles sees a debasement of the female in saints' legends as a counterpart to this emphasis on maleness. She notes an increase in incidents of physical exposure and torture of female martyrs in the French legends of the thirteenth century, and concludes that women are ever more frequently shown as sexual objects rather than as spiritual witnesses of their faith.¹⁶⁷ Both authors recognize an increased concern with the body, but seem to interpret it in gender-

¹⁶⁵ For changes in the representations of Christ over time see Jaroslav Pelikan, The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997).

¹⁶⁶ Leo Steinberg, The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion (1983; New York: Pantheon, 1996).

¹⁶⁷ Brigitte Cazelles, The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century (Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania P, 1991) introduction.

specific ways. The interest in corporeality was a general phenomenon, though, concerning both men and women, as witnessed by the narrative development of several of the saints' legends, for which the legend of the young virgin martyr Sainte Foy can serve as one example.¹⁶⁸

2. The Female Body

Carolyn Walker Bynum takes issue with Steinberg's overtly sexual interpretation of medieval and early modern images of Jesus. She reads the increased physicality in the pictorial renderings of Christ less as a validation of his male sexuality than as a generally heightened interest in the body after the twelfth century.¹⁶⁹ *Images of Christ in the late Middle Ages at*

¹⁶⁸ In this legend the male figure of Saint Caprasius, who follows Foy in her suffering, gains in importance from the tenth to the fifteenth century, but the emphasis on physical appearance increases for both saints. In the older version, Foy's spiritual strength was her main attribute, while in the fifteenth century there is clearly more interest in her beauty, her virginity, and in her physical suffering. At the same time, the physical beauty of Caprasius who, as a follower of Foy, becomes a martyr in his own right, is now also praised and described extensively, even though it was barely noticed in the earlier version, see The Book of Sainte Foy, trans. Pamela Sheingorn (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1995) 21 and 33-38.

¹⁶⁹ Carolyn Walker Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion (New York: Zone Books, 1991) devotes chapter 3 to a critique of Steinberg. For disagreement with Bynum over the de facto validation of women in this process and a critique of presentation of the female as "maternal" see Kathleen Biddick, "Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible," in Nancy Partner, ed. Studying Medieval Women: Sex Gender, Feminism (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1993) 87-116, repr. Kathleen Biddick, The Shock of Medievalism (Durham: Duke UP, 1998) 135-62. In his revised edition Steinberg clarifies that his focus was the validation of the body and the inclusion of its sexuality, rather than Christ's "male-ness." He sees his position on corporeality, therefore, as less contrary to Bynum than she had assumed; see Steinberg, The Sexuality of Christ, rev. ed. 1996.

times also depicted Him in specifically female poses, such as lactating, nurturing his faithful, and giving birth to his church.¹⁷⁰

To see Christ, the man, endowed with these qualities made it possible for women to identify closely with their Savior. Throughout the Middle Ages woman had been primarily identified with the material world (as opposed to the mind, which was seen as predominantly male and superior).¹⁷¹ From the twelfth century on, though, corporeality entailed a special predisposition towards entering a mystical union with God through His son. New emphasis on the incarnation created the possibility for woman to mediate the redemption of mankind by achieving spiritual perfection through the mystical experience of physical union with the Savior's body.¹⁷² The paradoxical union of body and mind, of abjection and glory, allowed the visionary believer to enter spiritual bliss, and occasionally even experience physical identification with Christ's suffering.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ See also Carolyn W. Bynum, Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley: U of California P, 1982).

¹⁷¹ For a number of authors who argued the differentiation between men and women along this line from Antiquity through the Middle Ages see Carolyn Dinshaw 22-23.

¹⁷² This validation of corporeality and femininity has also been traced by Mimi Dixon with regards to the Digby play of Mary Magdalen: "'Thys Body of Mary': 'Femynyte' and 'Inward Mythe' in the Digby Mary Magdalene," Medievalia, 18 (1995): 221-44. The play also entails a sea voyage of a young queen given up for dead in childbirth, recalling the plot of Apollonius and connecting the Digby Mary Magdalen with La Belle H el ene and her analogues through the motif of the "Woman abandoned at Sea," see 133, n. 228.

¹⁷³ For the value of "abjection" in overcoming medieval traditions like

This development is illustrated through the imagery used in the testimonials of the thirteenth-century mystics, both on the continent and in England, especially in East Anglia, as well as demonstrated through the increased appearance of the psychosomatic phenomenon of the stigmata.¹⁷⁴ Mystic ecstasy remained suspect, though, since it often occurred outside of the hierarchical structure of the church, and it had to be carefully distinguished from satanic obsession.¹⁷⁵ Close clerical, that is to say, male supervision was therefore advised, and believers who strayed from orthodox doctrine or official usage risked being executed as heretics.¹⁷⁶

the ideal of the "sealed body", see Karma Lochrie, *The Language of the Flesh* 115-40.

¹⁷⁴ See Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994, and also F. C. Bauerschmidt, "Seeing Jesus: Julian of Norwich and the Text of Christ's Body," *JMEMS* 27.2 (1997): 189-214. There were a number of male mystics as well, and St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) had received the stigmata approximately a century earlier than Julian of Norwich (1343-1413). The point is not that males were excluded, but that by the thirteenth century women were included and even allowed to give voice to their experiences, even though they often depended on the help of male scribes. Also, as Bynum points out, qualities traditionally defined as feminine, such as feeling and nurturing, were emphasized and validated, whether in males or females (*Fragmentation* 191).

¹⁷⁵ Peter Brown, quoting Mary Douglas' *Natural Symbols*, notes the move away from ecstasy in Late Antiquity in connection with the transformation of society at that time: "An exacting and frankly histrionic ritual of dissociation replaced the trance. ... This is the sign of a shift in a whole society towards greater explicitness and harder boundaries. Breaching the identity by trance was treated with genuine distaste - it was demonic"; see *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1982) 135. By the thirteenth century it was not necessarily viewed as demonic, but it remained ambiguous.

¹⁷⁶ Marguerite Porete, who insisted on preaching and criticizing the church publicly, was burnt at the stake in 1310; see Petroff 15-16.

In the religious climate of the thirteenth century, collections of female saints' lives elaborated the virginity, youth, and beauty of their noble subjects and underlined their torture with emotional description.¹⁷⁷ In its summary form, the life of H  l  ne reads almost like the typical profile of a female virgin martyr saint: "The virgin is young, beautiful, rich and noble. Her father is part of the pagan establishment ... [and] his narrative role is encoded in the pagan suitor and/or judge. ... The virgin's mother is absent from the virgin's life ... through death. ... The virgin's counsels are thus her own and she is secretly a Christian. Sooner or later she is approached for marriage, seduction or rape and is persecuted for her refusal of these options. ... Desired and tortured by officialdom, the virgin is threatened ... and dismembered in some way."¹⁷⁸

H  l  ne's father is not a pagan, but he does not behave like a Christian when he threatens his daughter's virginity. H  l  ne, while not concealing her Christianity, has to hide her resolution to abide by its tenets. She is not "incarcerated, stripped naked, publicly flogged, lacerated, burnt and boiled," nor does she proceed "with attendant doves ... to the court of heaven."¹⁷⁹ But, although H  l  ne is not a saint, and the text never calls her

¹⁷⁷ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Saints' Lives and the Female Reader." Forum for Modern Language Studies, 27.4 (1991): 314-32 refers to the South English Legendary, which in its thirteenth-century recensions principally treats of virgins.

¹⁷⁸ Wogan-Browne 314.

¹⁷⁹ Wogan-Browne 315.

that, her life is accompanied by miracles and she becomes the mother of a saint. She is not killed, but she is mutilated, and parts of her story seem modeled on the kind of saint's "life" just described.

With the revaluation of the incarnation, the role of Christ's mother took on new significance also. Until the twelfth century there were few reports of Marian miracles, but after 1100 their number increased, as did pictorial representations of her.¹⁸⁰ The Virgin's growing influence may to some extent be seen as a counterpart to the elevation of secular ladies in the romances of courtly love, which Chrétien de Troyes and his contemporaries had composed in the twelfth century, but it also reflected the affective trend in Christian religiosity.¹⁸¹ It is thus not surprising that Hélène, like the other exiled heroines, frequently directs her prayers to the Holy Mother with whose sufferings she can identify, since she too is a mother who has lost her son(s). In her suffering and unquestioning acceptance of God's will, the persecuted queen seems modeled on the image of Mary, quintessential and holiest of mothers.

The connection between the physical and the spiritual opened up religion as a field of agency for women in England and on the continent, at least to a certain extent, even though the

¹⁸⁰ See R. W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages (1953; New Haven: Yale UP, 1992) 248 and Jaroslav Pelikan, Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996).

¹⁸¹ On the similarities and differences between the elevation of woman in religious and in secular literature see Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages 244-46.

Christian interpretation of the Bible offered few realistic role models for women. If the strong women from the Old Testament were to be read allegorically, there remained above all Mary the virgin mother, impossible to emulate, and Eve, condemned as the curse of mankind for her sexuality.¹⁸² Even women who dedicated their lives to religion, such as the Sisters of Clare, were not allowed to preach, hear confession, grant absolution, or administer the sacraments - such activities being seen as prerogatives of male priests -, but they could assume positions of leadership in convents, and overall, the thirteenth century "saw the first 'womens' movement' in religion."¹⁸³

The gains in religious standing were counterbalanced by loss of certain privileges in the secular arena.¹⁸⁴ Until the twelfth century women in Western Europe had been able to inherit

¹⁸² Marina Warner is quite outspoken on the elusiveness of Mary's kind of holiness as a virgin mother; see Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary (New York: Random House, 1976). Even the heroines of antiquity were classified either as chaste, like Lucrece and Penelope, or as temptresses, such as Cleopatra, and even Dido, see Marilynn Desmond, Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994), especially her chapt 2: "Dido as Libido."

¹⁸³ See Wogan-Browne, paraphrasing Bynum, 315.

¹⁸⁴ In England "Eleanor's disgrace in 1173 ended the queens' regencies, further reducing their public role," John Carmi Parsons, "The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England," in Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women, ed. J. Carpenter and S.-B. MacLean (Urbana, Ill.: U of Illinois P, 1995) 147-77, quote on 150. In France, the House of Valois assumed the throne in 1328 and, following several extra-marital affairs of French princesses, excluded women from the right to succession. Ferrante cites socio-economic reasons for the decline in the status of women, which she sees paralleling the increased hostility against other "minorities," such as Jews and 'Infidels,' Joan Ferrante, Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante (New York: Columbia UP, 1975).

land, and noble women had acted as regents when their husbands died at a young age or were absent on wars. During and after the thirteenth century these rights were markedly curtailed: "The increasingly complex society of the twelfth century required a more institutionalized structure, which devalued the role of women in public life. The family structure was redefined and the status of women reduced as primogeniture tended to supplant a wider kinship network. As a group, women were being systematically deprived of control over their wealth and reduced to dependency upon their families and husbands."¹⁸⁵

To some women religion offered a welcome outlet for their talents and energies, as the strength of the Beguine movement on the continent in mid-thirteenth century attests, although the church remained wary of females in leadership positions.¹⁸⁶ The General Council of Vienne in 1312 called for the expulsion of the Beguines from the church, and in 1318 the archbishop of Cologne required the integration of all Beguine associations into orders

¹⁸⁵ Jo Ann McNamara, "The Need to Give" in Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe, eds. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991) 199-221, 204. Not all women were treated alike, of course: their status varied among different social strata, some families had female heirs only, and widow's enjoyed greater liberties than wives. There were always some women from wealthy and noble families who received instruction in Latin and philosophy and were able to achieve respectable positions in society (Christine de Pizan being the often quoted example), but they were the exceptions rather than the rule. For a differentiated view of the situation in northern France see Robert Hajdu, "The Position of Noblewomen in the Pays des Coutumes, 1100-1300," Journal of Family History 5.2 (1980): 122-44.

¹⁸⁶ For the struggle of Clare of Assisi to have her order officially recognized, even after the Franciscans had been publicly acknowledged, see Petroff 66-82.

approved by the pope, expressing a preference to see religious women cloistered.¹⁸⁷

In the legends of saints, though, women were allowed to actively fight off aggressive pagan suitors and to achieve sainthood through a martyr's death. They could also become famous as the mothers of great men, like St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine; like St. Helena, mother of Constantine; or her namesake, H el ene from Constantinople, mother of St. Martin and grandmother of St. Brice. Anneke Mulder-Bakker points out that while there were not many "mother-saints," the number of "holy mothers" increased during the thirteenth century, and that "entire genealogies of royal and princely lines were constructed around these holy mothers" and contributed to their popularity.¹⁸⁸ As founder of one such genealogy and both mother and grandmother of a saint, H el ene recalls above all the figure of Saint Anne, who also enjoyed great popularity in the thirteenth century. Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn show that the saint represented both private and public, male and female aspirations: "Saint Anne is a good example of a medieval image associated with 'female' experiences but also available to males. She could represent women's desire for motherhood, but at the same time she

¹⁸⁷ The rise and decline of the Beguine movement is detailed in R. W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages (1970; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1990) 318-31.

¹⁸⁸ Anneke Mulder-Bakker Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages (New York: Garland, 1995) 23. (She defines "mother-saints" as sainted because of their motherhood [like Mary], whereas "holy mothers" are holy women who may also have been mothers.)

could express the dynastic impulses of royalty...."¹⁸⁹ This holds true also for H el ene whose story validates marriage, procreation, and dynastic stability, as well as faith. After all, she does not find permanent refuge in the convent in Flanders to which she first escapes from her father; rather her role is to marry and become the mother of two successful sons.¹⁹⁰

Motherhood is an important theme in the tales of the "Girl Without Hands," and La Belle H el ene adds an additional, almost farcical episode, which discusses the merits of marriage versus celibacy. When Brice wants to avoid marriage because of his desire to join an order (14619-20), he is advised by the Archbishop of Tours to marry instead. (The archbishop even offers to wed the maiden herself, but has to be reminded by her, the Saracen, that he is not supposed to do so). Even though Brice's betrothal to a Saracen princess serves as a plot device to facilitate his escape from prison, it is clear from the text that celibate sainthood is not a goal for everyone, and that marriage is necessary both for the consolidation of ruling families as well as for the continuation of Christianity.

¹⁸⁹ Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, eds. Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society (Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1990) 5.

¹⁹⁰ Similarly Mulder-Bakkers writes of Ivetta of Huy: "Her motherhood, and the status it had in society, now enabled her to go in a new direction, for which she could appeal to Mary for a theological basis," 237.

3. Conclusion

The earlier view of the contempt of the flesh, which was an important perspective in Western Europe from the fourth century to until at least the beginning of the twelfth, made room for an adulation of the body (especially in suffering), and the female body -as well as the corporeality of the female- became validated within these parameters.¹⁹¹ The veneration of the Virgin Mother, combined with genealogical concerns of the nobility allowed the wrongly persecuted queen from folklore to be embraced by hagiography.

In accord with Douglas's observations, the female body carries not only private, but also "official" messages. The aspirations of a strict and centralized clerical hierarchy are reflected in an equally strict view of the body, foremost in the idealization of virginity, which represents not only physical but also spiritual purity.¹⁹² But even the body of the married woman, especially of a queen, still signals importantly: her faithfulness in marriage mirrors the stability of the realm as

¹⁹¹ Kathleen Biddick warns against too positive a view of this validation of "femaleness", and sees it as connected with the gendering of cultural activities at this period: "Just as learned theologians produced physicality as an effect of textuality, pious women could produce textuality as an effect of physicality. Their performance provided a crucial hinge that could join object with interpretation and the tangible with the intangible. The performance of this hinge function was gendered feminine, not because of anatomy or maternity, but because of the gendering effects of dominant learned culture in this period, which conflated the oral and the popular with the feminine," Biddick, The Shock of Medievalism 157.

¹⁹² The "dangers" of homosexuality are not even considered in the poem.

well as the steadfastness of her faith.¹⁹³ Any violation of the body's boundaries, be it through incest, adultery, mutilation, or any other pollution, constitutes a threat to the community she represents.¹⁹⁴ In order to maintain or restore the order of society, the boundaries (both of society and of its symbol, the body) have to be kept intact. This need for protection of the boundaries is particularly obvious in a situation of war - such as the crusades.

¹⁹³ For the connection between saintliness and royalty see the concept of "saintly kingship," or "the telescoping between sanctity and noble birth" see André Vauchez, "Lay People's Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Century)," in Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Szell 21-32. "This privilege accorded the nobility persisted north of the Alps, ... until the thirteenth century and, in certain places until much later," Vauchez, 26-27.

¹⁹⁴ See the argument of La Manekine that no physically imperfect woman can be Queen of Hungary. While this probably also reflects on the daughter's likeness to her mother, it is formulated as a general

IV. La Belle Hélène, Text and Context

A. Clement and Henry

If it is true that in presenting us with a body that is threatened in its integrity by incest and mutilation, La Belle Hélène expresses concerns with integrity, unity, and control, a look at the poem's narrative setting should reveal more specifically whose concerns for unity and order are expressed and addressed.

The drama of Hélène's spiritual and physical journey is played out against a background of holy wars and the liberation of Jerusalem. It thus seems to point to a time frame between the eleventh and fourteenth century. A number of characters in the poem bear the names of historical figures, but the individuals (most likely) referred to lived in vastly different centuries. It is thus difficult to fix the poem's fictional setting into a historical context. A review of the personae and topography of the poem nevertheless provides some interesting clues for the interpretation of the poem.

The name of Pope Clement refers to the famous successor of St. Peter, the first of all popes:

Aprés che que Jhesus ot souffert passion,
 Et che Vespasiens en prist la vengison,
 Et Titus, li siens fieux, que tant ot de renon,
 Si ot ung apostole a Romme [...],
 Par droit nom de baptesme avoit Climent a nom.

principle.

Sains est en paradis, de Dieu en ot le don,
 Car bien le deservi en sa rennasion. (18-24)
 After Jesus had suffered His Passion,
 And Vespasian took revenge,
 And (after) Titus, his son, who was so famous,
 There was an apostle in Rome [...]
 By rights he received the name Clement in baptism.
 He is safe in paradise, God gave him this gift,
 Since he well deserved it in his rebirth.

Clement I was pope from 90 to 99 AD. Legend has it that he was killed by drowning, and he became the patron of seafarers, a fitting protector for H el ene's repeated sea voyages. Despite his fame as martyr and saint, his name was not adopted by another pope until the end of the twelfth century. The revival of the old names at that time can be understood as an expression of the curial desire to reconnect with the early Christian Roman origins, when the Church was thought to have been untouched by corruption (and free from Germanic domination).¹⁹⁵ Between 1187 and 1352 four popes (and two anti-popes) used the name Clement, which might have partly inspired the legendary length of the reign of pope Clement in La Belle H el ene.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ R. W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages 140-42.

¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, the name might also have been inspired by the Clementine Recognitions, where the separation and reunion of the family happens to a Clement, whose mother is accosted by her brother-in-law and leaves home with her twins in order to avoid his advances. She is shipwrecked and separated from her sons. In despair she gnaws her own

Of these, only Clement III (1187-91) was a Roman residing in Rome like the Clement in the poem; Clement IV (1265-58), Clement V (1305-14) and Clement VI (1342-52) were all French. Clement V was crowned in Lyons and in 1309 became the first pope to take up residence in Avignon, which remained the seat of the papacy until the Great Schism (1378-1417), during which one pope resided in Avignon and another in Rome.¹⁹⁷ The papacy of Clement III was short and insignificant, but he was, after a succession of non-Italians, the first Roman to be elected, and several incidents during his rule could be viewed as paralleling the story of La Belle Hélène. Clement's chief interest was to regain Jerusalem, which had been taken in 1187 by Saladin, and he vigorously supported the Third Crusade (1188-92). His aim was to make peace among the Christians and encourage war against the infidels, for which he tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to bring about reconciliation between England under Henry II and France under Philip Augustus.

Clement III became briefly involved in the succession of Sicily, the inheritance of a young queen named Constance. This Greek princess, daughter of the Norman king Roger II, was the legitimate heir to Sicily. At the death of King William II of Sicily, her husband, Henry VI of Germany (r. 1190-97), laid claim

hands off, which reduces her to beg for a living, see Perry Ancient Romances, his Appendix I.

¹⁹⁷ For a history of the popes see Eamon Duffy, Saints and Sinners (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), and Geoffrey Barraclough, The Medieval Papacy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968).

to her heritage, but Clement, trying to curtail the power of the Hohenstaufens, backed an illegitimate relative of the Norman family instead. Clement did not live to see Henry VI march into Sicily, but when Henry himself suddenly died soon afterwards, Constance remained in Sicily with her infant son and, like Hélène, became dependent on papal approval.¹⁹⁸

The reference in La Belle Hélène to an English king named Henry may be related to Henry II (r. 1154-89), who died during Clement III's papacy. Henry's marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152 brought the French counties of Anjou and Aquitaine to the English crown and provided the basis for the English claim to the French throne during the Hundred Years War (1339-1453), during which time La Belle Hélène appears to have been composed.

B. Clovis and Saint Martin

Henry II reigned for 35 years, two of those during the papacy of Clement III. Yet, the name for the King of France in La Belle Hélène is Clovis, and not Louis VII (r. 1137-80) or Philip Augustus (r. 1180-1223), who were Henry's contemporaries. Clovis I was the founder of the first French dynasty in the fifth century and converted to Christianity around 498. The poem alludes to a legendary episode in which Clovis received the

¹⁹⁸ Constance granted the new pope, Innocent III, control over the kingdom until her son eventually ascended to the imperial throne. Frederick II (r. 1194-1250) opposed the papal policy of crusades and temporarily regained Jerusalem through peaceful negotiations with the Muslims whose culture he admired.

future insignia of royal France, the three lilies:¹⁹⁹

Mes ly rois Cloevis qui tant ot baronnie
 Vint assés tost après. Ycheux, quoy quë on die,
 Exaucha le loy Dieu, le fils sainte Marie;
 Ly fleurs de lis li fu des saints chieus envoïe
 Dont les armes de Franche ont si grant seignourie.

(4518-22)

But the king Clovis, who had such nobility
 Came soon thereafter. And he, as one says,
 Honored God's law and the son of Saint Mary.
 The fleur de lis were given him by those saints
 From whom the arms of France have such great authority.

According to tradition, Clovis, like Constantine the Great, had sought a favorable sign before going into battle and vowed to convert if he defeated his enemy. Besides receiving his new coat of arms from an angel, he felt supported by the spirit of St. Martin (ca. 316-397) and, after his victory, expressed his gratitude by establishing firm ties to the cult of that saint.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ For an illustration of this event at the battle of Tolbiac see Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS f. fr. 2606, Grandes Chroniques de France, ca. 1400, fol. 2, repr. Anne Lombard-Jourdan, Fleur de Lis et Oriflamme: signes célestes du royaume de France (Paris, Presses du CNRS, 1991), 312.

²⁰⁰ Five manuscripts of the sixteenth century express the connection with the saint in their titular rubrics, calling the text Le roman de la belle Helayne de Constantinoble, mere de Saint Martin de Tours en Touraine et de saint Brice son frere [sic], see Roussel La Belle

Saint Martin, who is depicted in the poem as one of the twin sons of H el ene and whose adventures constitute part of the poem, had been bishop of Tours from 371 until 397, and he remained the foremost saint of the Merovingian dynasty until the seventh century, when the Capetians replaced him with Saint Denis as their patron saint.²⁰¹ Clovis and Saint Martin thus present the founding fathers of French Christian kingship.²⁰²

Apparently we are dealing in La Belle H el ene with two sets of names: Clovis and Saint Martin from the fourth and fifth centuries, and (presumably) Clement III and Henry II from the twelfth. The starkly anachronistic treatment of them as contemporaries appears to be thematically motivated. Written in the fourteenth century the poem evokes the church as uniting England and France by recalling their common crusades against the Saracens. It eschews the painful issue of the Avignon papacy supported by the contemporary French kings, and instead represents Christian France through its legendary Merovingian roots and its connection to the early local legend of Saint Martin of Tours. The papacy in Rome is in no way contested, and

H el ene 40.

²⁰¹ A translation of the Vita Martini by Sulpicius Severus by F. R. Hoare can be found in Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head (1995; University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP 2000). For historical background see Claire Stancliffe, St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983) 1-29.

²⁰² For the political function of hagiography in general, and specifically in the Merovingian period, see Paul Fouracre, "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography," Past and Present 127 (1990): 3-38.

the English king, who historically supported it, is shown in a positive light. Like Clovis, he too obtains his royal crest during the course of the poem, which legitimizes both dynasties and puts them on equal footing.

C. Constantinople, Tours, and Rome

The connection between Rome and Constantinople, based on mutual dependence yet difference, is reflected in the relationship between Antoine and Clement. Although Antoine wins the pope's niece on the basis of his bravery in battle, the men's friendship becomes tarnished when, after his wife's death, Antoine solicits dispensation from Clement to marry his own daughter. His obsession with H el ene is made public when he has his daughter's image painted on all the pillars of the papal palace:

Et tous les pilers du palais ly rouva
 Qu'il painsist ymages telles que en se cambre a,
 Ou propre non d'Elaine, se fille qu'il ama. (397-99)

And the pillars of the palace he bid him
 To paint with images such as he had in his room,
 In the name of H el ene, his daughter whom he loved.

This motif, which evokes the adventures of Tristan and Lancelot, also serves as an illustration of "Eastern excess."²⁰³

²⁰³ For "Eastern excess" see V E.

The episode shows H el ene treated as an idol and recalls, in somewhat distorted fashion, the iconoclastic controversy, thus underscoring the tension between the Eastern and the Western Churches, which had simmered since the eighth century and had been more recently aggravated through the crusaders' sacking of Constantinople in 1204.²⁰⁴

In La Belle H el ene, Tours is celebrated as a stronghold of Christianity in a still largely pagan country, a city that offers refuge and welcome to the poor. Tours is the place of Martin's miracles, and the town where H el ene finds shelter at various points in the story. The future of the city is safeguarded by the fact that Martin's nephew, Saint Brice, will follow him as bishop.²⁰⁵

Despite the importance of Tours, there is no doubt that in La Belle H el ene Rome is the center of power in the Christian universe. Once more a foundation myth is woven into the text: the story of the twins abducted and cared for by wild animals recalls not only the Life of Saint Eustache but also the story of Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome. The poem thus emphasizes the prerogative of the Roman See and the correctness

²⁰⁴ The iconoclastic movement "dominated the church of Constantinople for sixty years from 726 to 787. In 729 the Greek emperor sent Pope Gregory II a mandate forbidding him to place pictures of martyrs and angels in the churches under his jurisdiction"; see Southern, Western Society 58. In the poem, the situation is shown as reversed; it is the Eastern ruler who has images painted onto the pillars of the papal palace.

²⁰⁵ The historic Brice, who did succeed Martin as archbishop of Tours, was not related to him and had substantial differences with him; see Stancliffe 258.

of its faith in three ways: through allusion to Rome's founding fathers, through the persona of the Pope Clement, whose name evokes the martyrdom of early Roman Christians, and through images of the former glory of Rome. It is in Rome that the story starts and ends, and it will be continued in the progeny of H el ene in Tours and in the Western church eternally guarded under the long-lived Pope Clement in Rome.

And yet, by the fourteenth century, both Tours and Rome had lost their splendor and their political influence: Tours to Paris, and Rome to Avignon.²⁰⁶ Thus, to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century audiences our poem does not reflect reality but presents a world from the past. There seems to be a yearning for the old times before Avignon took over from Rome, before Saint Denis became the patron saint of France and his city, Paris, began to detract from the glory (and economic welfare) of Tours.²⁰⁷ More than just a nostalgic view backward, however, this textual return to the origins also presents a vision for the

²⁰⁶ See Richard Krautheimer, Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980, esp. 228, and Jennifer Summit, "Topography as Historiography: Petrarch, Chaucer, and the Making of Medieval Rome", JMEMS 30.2 (2000): 211-46.

²⁰⁷ The importance of a Saint's cult for a city's welfare is shown in the rivalry between Tours and Marmoutiers as keepers of St. Martin's relics. Sharon Farmer, Communities of Saint Martin: Legends and Ritual in Medieval Tours (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1991). Even though tradition (erroneously) has it that pope Clement I had sent Denis as missionary to Gaul, St. Denis' name is not mentioned once in the entire chanson and his presence is definitely suppressed in favor of St. Martin. The affiliation of St. Denis with the Capetian monarchy and his construction as a national emblem is traced by Gabrielle Spiegel, "The Cult of St. Denis and Capetian kingship," in Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History, ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983) 141-68.

future, since a number of Catholic prophecies in the mid-fourteenth century insisted that Rome had to regain its former glory before the Last Days could come.²⁰⁸

The Avignon papacy illustrated that any fragmentation, be it between Rome and Constantinople or between Rome and Avignon, could only weaken the church in its struggle against secular control. Consequently the ideal evoked in La Belle Hélène is a centralized clerical hierarchy that held the emperors both of Rome and Constantinople under its sway and did not encounter any interference from the current French king.²⁰⁹ The poem thus elides reference to the contemporary French monarchy and replaces its patron saint Saint Denis with Saint Martin, "the Apostle of Gaul, known sometimes as the thirteenth Apostle."²¹⁰ The church's longing for a strict and unified system of control found its

²⁰⁸ Between 1370 and 1380 Catherine of Siena was one such prophet. She "envisioned a three-stage plan with which to reestablish a moral and peaceable Christendom: the return of the papacy to Italy, where she believed it once again could be a spiritual institution for all of Christendom, rather than a political agency under the control of the political agenda of France; the establishment of peace among the warring factions in Italy and Europe; and the undertaking of a Crusade to bring Christianity to the Islamic world"; see Petroff 18-19.

²⁰⁹ Peter Brown emphasizes the early centralized hierarchy under Rome in contrast to the relative decentralization, which characterized Constantinople in Late Antiquity: "In western Europe, the circle of spiritual power was drawn from a single locus. The clergy stood unchallenged, under the awesome shadows of the long-dead heroes of faith. ... In Byzantium, the locus of spiritual power wavered as paradoxically as did the fluid society in which it was exercised"; see Brown, Society and the Holy, 182-83. For exaggerated centralization of the church during the thirteenth century, which overburdened the papacy while undermining the authority of the bishops over their dioceses, see Barraclough, The Medieval Papacy, 122-26.

²¹⁰ Stephen Wilson, Saints 3.

counterpart in equally strict demands on the body: virginity was the highest state of physicality, followed by chastity and only then by marital fidelity.²¹¹ The emphasis on virginity clearly stood in conflict with the interests of secular dynasties; La Belle Hélène, which values marriage and procreation would therefore have appealed to the nobility. Besides securing heirs for the empires of Rome and Constantinople, though, the marriages in the poem also contribute to a kind of "saintly lineage," as the text foreshadows the arrival of Saint Brice as successor to Saint Martin. In general, the poem emphasizes the importance of the church over that of the secular leadership, but without offending or excluding the latter.

²¹¹ For church doctrine see the New Catholic Encyclopedia. Clerical resistance and polemic against women and marriage is the subject of Katharina Wilson and Elizabeth M. Makowski, Wykked Wyves and the Woe of Marriage: Misogamous Literature from Juvenal to Chaucer (Albany: SUNY P, 1990).

V. The Text of the Female Body

A. Pollution of the Body

Incest is the most common bond among the analogues to La Belle Hélène; Chaucer connects it even with the story of Constance while ostensibly claiming to avoid it.²¹² The motif was well known in Antiquity and made famous in the West through the story of Oedipus, and it continued to be treated in the Middle Ages, both in secular writing and in hagiography.²¹³

Although incest is an old and widely known taboo, there are differences between cultures as to which degree of kinship relation is forbidden, and in some societies and under certain circumstances, as in ancient Egypt, incest was required. In his

²¹² It has even been argued that the Man of Law's desire to control his own tale and its heroine is somewhat incestuous, see Shoaf, R. A. "Unwemmed Custance": Circulation, property, and Incest in the *Man of Law's Tale*." Exemplaria 2 (1990): 287-302.

²¹³ The Byzantine romance of the Clementine Recognitions, for which Perry assumes as source a pagan Greek romance antedating the second century, starts out with the longing of a nobleman's brother for his sister-in-law, which would have qualified as incestuous desire under the laws of consanguinity; see Perry 291. "Apollonius of Tyre," possibly also based on a Byzantine romance, opens with the incestuous relationship between the Asian king of Antioch and his daughter. Elizabeth Archibald dates its earliest Latin version back at least to the tenth century, "The Flight from Incest: Two Late Classical Precursors of the Constance Theme," The Chaucer Review 20.4 (1986): 259-72, see 264. Perry thinks that the Apollonius "can be dated with confidence on the basis of its abundant numismatic terminology and calculations to the third century after Christ," Perry 295. An example of a hagiographical re-write of the Oedipal situation is the story of St. Gregory. For the popularity of the incest motif in Latin and French literature see Nancy V. Durling, "Rewriting Gender: Yde et Olive and the Ovidian Myth," Romance Language Annual (1989): 256-62.

famous study on kinship, Levi-Strauss compares the circulation of women among men to the exchange of gifts (and language), and sees the incest taboo as a means to ensure that trade is maintained between families and groups and not restricted within them.²¹⁴ His concept is, needless to say, demeaning to women, who are put into the same category as chattel, and has been criticized, most notably by Gayle Rubin.²¹⁵ Like other anthropological investigations it shows, though, that the taboo of incest is a cultural construction intended to ensure social relations rather than a biological concern.²¹⁶

Mary Douglas has investigated this relationship between physical and sociological phenomena. In her research on pollution and purification rituals in primitive societies she has observed that trespasses against the communal order are purified by physical procedures, and she has come to the conclusion that the body of the victim treated in the ritual serves as an emblem for its community. The analogy between body and community is made when trespasses against the rules of the society are formulated as kinds of pollution, which have to be undone through physical cleansing ritual. The body is thus accepted as an

²¹⁴ Claude Levi-Strauss, The Elementary Structures of Kinship, trans. James H. Bell et al. (Boston: Beacon, 1969).

²¹⁵ Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Toward an Anthology of Women, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review P, 1975) 175-210.

²¹⁶ It exemplifies Peter Stallybrass's observation that "boundaries... have to be constructed" before transgression can occur, see "Boundary and Transgression: Body, Text, Language," Stanford French Review 14 (1990): 9-23, quote on 10.

emblem for its society. Not only has it symbolic value in the purification ritual, but it also serves as a map for defining trespasses prior to any actual violation, by indicating the kinds of physical pollution that have to be avoided. This means that dangers to a community can be expressed through the formulation of physical taboos, and, vice versa, physical taboos can be seen as expressions of such fears.

This thesis argues that incest as a literary motif can similarly be investigated for its socio-political symbolism concerning the society represented in a text, and I believe that this kind of inquiry, while not necessarily appropriate for every text, is justified and fruitful with regard to the story of La Belle Hélène.²¹⁷ In this poem, incest occurs twice, and both times it reflects a threat to the Christian community. First it shows a weakness in the Eastern part of the Christian realm, and then it represents the threat from a cultural "Other". If incest were the result of some oriental roots of the story, reflecting the Egyptian custom of marriage between brother and sister, as Krappe has surmised,²¹⁸ it could be dismissed as a heathen trait,

²¹⁷ That is how Frank Whigham sees it, for example, in his analysis of the Jacobean Duchess of Malfi, where he reads incestuous desire as a reflection on the anxieties of a ruling class faced with the new upward mobility of lower classes; see "Incest and Ideology: *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614)," in Kastan and Stallybrass 263-74.

²¹⁸ "...notre motif ne réfléchit nullement un caprice royale, un forfait de la part d'un père dénaturé, mais une institution respectable et respectée, propre à bon nombre d'anciennes civilisations." Krappe 341. He sees this as explanation for the clerical consent to the incestuous marriage.

alien and without concern to the "righteous".

Instead it is portrayed as an evil that has to be eradicated in order to strengthen the Christian community against attacks from the outside. In the face of the East-West schism, and at a time of constant warfare, H el ene must maintain bodily purity since she physically stands for the health of the realm(s). As the daughter of Antoine she almost becomes Queen of Constantinople, and as the wife of Henry and queen of England she represents the integrity of that country as well. Additionally, in the clerical context of the "spiritual epic" of La Belle H el ene, the integrity of the queen's body stands symbolically for the well being of Western Christendom altogether.

Pollution taboos are usually tied to metaphysical sanctions in order to render them effective. In the Christian society of La Belle H el ene, incest incurs the wrath of God, and daughters threatened with it invoke His help against their fathers. H el ene is clearly under the Almighty's protection when she flees Constantinople, and when incest in the poem occurs outside of Christianity, it is even depicted as the result of satanic inspiration and becomes a symbol for paganism.

In Bavaria the "converted sinner" Antoine confronts the illicit desire of a Saracen father under the sway of a fiendish pagan idol. The Bavarian king has constructed a false "paradise," calls himself god, and venerates an iron idol. His

daughter has fled the court and seeks help from the Christian
Antoine:

De men pere me plaing qui, par oeuvre ennemie

Se fait dieu apeler en ycelle partie.

Fait a un paradis en se sale vaultie;

Tout ly diable d'enfer ly tiennent compagnie,... (4379-82)

I complain of my father, who, through the work of the enemy

Has himself called god in these parts.

He has built a paradise in his vaulted hall;

All the devils of hell keep him company there,...

S'a un homme d'arain, il n'est rien qui il ne die (4388)

[. . .]

Espouser me voloit, pour che me suis fuie,

Car sachiés que je voeul que je soie baptizie. 4392-93)

He has a man of iron, there is nothing he won't say

[. . .]

He wanted to marry me, that's why I've fled,

Because understand that I want to be baptized.

Graibault's incestuous desire is clearly inspired by the idol:

Et li faux anemis qui de maux estoit plain, (4310)

[. . .]

Voiant tous a parlé, et dist par mos haultain:

"Graibault, che dist le diable, or enteng mon reclain!

Je voeul que tu espouses en che palais hautain

Clariande te fille, que tant a douc le sain" (4312-15)

And the false enemy who was full of evil,

[. . .]

Seeing all he said, and says in a haughty way [word]:

"Graibault, said the devil, now hear my request!

I want that you marry in the high palace

Clariande your daughter, who has the sweet breast...."

Antoine approaches the metal image, crossing himself four times, and then hacks it to pieces. The devils depart and a great storm destroys the false paradise:

A l'ymage d'arrain s'en est tantost alé,

A le terre l'abat, se ly brisa le nés;

De ly fu ly diables vistement conjures,

De Dieu de paradis, de ses hault nons secrés.

Tantost s'en est ly diables parties et deserves;

Telle tempeste mena, che dist l'auctorités,
 Que tous ly paradis est a terre versés. (4478-84)

To the iron image he soon went,
 threw it to the ground, and broke its nose;
 The devils were quickly banished by him,
 By the God of paradise, by His high and sacred name.
 Right away the devil left and took off.
 Such a storm he sent that, as the authorities say,
 All the paradise was tumbled to the earth.

Graibault recognizes the superior power of the Christian God and Antoine then also exorcizes the devil from his body. The fiend escapes with such wind and smoke that all the Saracens convert:

Et Antoine ly rois est aval avalés,
 Il est venus au roy, s'y est hault escriés:
 "Anemis, dist ly rois, par moi es conjures
 C'ou corps de che pequeur ne soies plus remés..." (4501-04)

And Antoine the king descended down,
 He came to the king, and called in loud voice:
 "Enemy, said the king, I bid you to dwell
 no longer in the body of this sinner..."

Adont s'est ly diables hors de sen corps sevrés

Par une grant fumiere; s'en est ly vens levés

Et mena tel oraige ly anemis mortés

Que cascun Sarazin s'est a jenous jetés

Et o Dieu souverain ottriés et donnés. (4508-11)

Then the devil departed from his body

in a great smoke; a wind came up from it

And the mortal enemy sent such a storm

That every Saracen fell to his knees

And pledged and gave himself to the sovereign God.

This scene clearly illustrates that the threat of sexual transgression is attributed to pagan influence. Physical pollution is equated with religious pollution; the body serves as a symbolic stand-in for its society. Incest in La Belle Hélène represents the threat of pollution from the infidel against Christianity's hegemony. At a time of crusades, images of physical purity and integrity, represented through the Christian ideals of virginity and chastity, stand for spiritual as well as cultural and "socio-political" purity.

In La Belle Hélène the placement of a first episode of incest in Constantinople highlights the conflict between the East

and the West church. In the literary tradition of medieval Europe, the East was the place where Western authors would locate monsters and aberrations and contemplate them from a safe distance. "Seen through the eyes of the West, the East is notoriously a region of relativism rather than absolute value... Sexual values are especially made relative in the East, with polygamists, hermaphrodites, even incestuous marriage in Mandeville's land of the khan all a matter of mere custom."²¹⁹ It is in keeping with this kind of "medieval orientalism" that La Belle Hélène locates Antoine's incestuous desire outside of Roman Christianity, linking Constantinople polemically to a sexually deranged East.²²⁰

With the schism between Rome and Constantinople in the background and its strong emphasis on the Roman origin of the pope, the poem may also have implied a criticism of the French popes who in 1305 had established the papacy to Avignon. For this move, which preceded the schism between Rome and Avignon, Petrarch had likewise used a metaphor of sexual pollution in calling it a "Babylonian captivity."

²¹⁹ Kathryn L. Lynch, "East Meets West in Chaucer's Squire's and Franklin's Tales," Speculum 70.3 (1995): 530-51, quote on 537.

²²⁰ Edward Said, Orientalism (1978; repr. New York: Routledge, 1979) refers to the attitude of superiority and lack of differentiation with which scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth century described peoples of the Middle East. A similar combination of ignorance and arrogance can also be observed in earlier times, although, as Maria Rosa Menocal has pointed out, during the Middle Ages the West at the same time lived in the shadow of the Orient's superiority in terms of culture and military strength; see The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1987).

But incest does not evoke the same meaning in every (con)text. In La Manekine, incest results from the fear of an interruption in the order of succession, and concern about the competition between male and female lines was in its own way a politically charged subject during the times of the Hundred Years War. In Mai und Beafloer, the political implication is less pronounced; the emphasis seems above all on the virtues of socially responsible love in marriage as opposed to the dangers of uncontrolled passion. In Emare, illicit desire is conjured up by a cloth from the Saracen East, which brings flaws in the moral order and ethical values of the West to the surface. In Apollonius, incest also seems to warn against moral and ethical trespasses, since it can be read as the threat of unbridled Eastern Dionysian passion to the Greek Apollonian ideal of balance and moderation.²²¹

In La Belle Hélène, which portrays a strong sense of community and depicts warfare between religions, an investigation of incest as a symbol of pollution in the sense of Mary Douglas provides the reader with additional insight onto the text's network of signification. What is on the surface depicted as a young woman's personal misfortune, at the same time reinforces the religious and political message of the poem: that "heretics" and pagans have to be cleansed, and that means either eliminated

²²¹ Dionysos, whose cult derived from Asia, is not directly mentioned, but his presence seems evoked through the name of the evil stepmother Dionysia.

or brought into the fold of the "righteous" faith of the Roman church.

B. Mutilation of the Body

Amputation does not occur in all the analogues and where it does, it is not always introduced in the same way. The severed arm or hand seems originally to have been thematically connected to the incest motif, possibly first as punishment for it and later as punishment for resisting it, as for example in Offa I, where it is first mentioned as a threat to the king of York's daughter for resisting her father's incestuous desire, and later used as punishment against her children.²²²

In La Manekine, as well as in several other analogues, mutilation becomes a means of self-defense. The heroine herself initiates it in order to ward off her father's unwanted approaches. This recalls stories of earlier times when nuns, threatened with rape by pillaging marauders, were reported to have cut off their noses in order to foil the aggressor's desire, as that mutilation was a minor violation compared to an attempt at their virginity.²²³

I want to argue that in La Belle Hélène mutilation, like

²²² Archibald likewise suggests "the mutilation of hands may have been originally a punishment or threat...." See The Flight from Incest 267.

²²³ See Jane Tibbetts-Schulenberg, "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," in Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Cornell UP, 1986) 29-72.

incest, describes a danger to the boundaries of the body and, following our argument in the previous section, stands emblematically for a threat to the boundaries of the community.

Mutilation is here not a consequence of incest; it results indirectly from persecution by the mother-in-law: H el ene's right hand is cut off as proof for her demise. It also bears her wedding ring, which later serves as the means of recognition between her husband and her sons. But besides serving as narrative devices, both incest and mutilation function more importantly as cultural emblems: as incest evokes the threat of trespass and invasion, so the mutilation of H el ene parallels the "dismemberment" of the realm of Christendom when the Holy Land was taken from it by the infidel. One more time the female body becomes an emblem of the community whose boundaries are under attack both from Byzantium as well as from the Saracens: the Roman Church, as well as the Roman Empire, is fighting for survival against the enemy.²²⁴

At the same time, the images of mutilation and the ensuing healing reflect the paradoxical message of Christianity, which praises the suffering of physical mutilation in martyrdom because of the spiritual healing which it promises. According to this belief, Christ the Savior becomes one with God and with his followers precisely through the breaking down of his own body,

²²⁴ For analogies in Renaissance texts see Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," in Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe, ed. M. Ferguson et al. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986) 123-42.

and innumerable collections of relics bear physical witness to the theological doctrine that the road to redemption leads through suffering and fragmentation. Thus, in La Belle Hélène, as in La Manekine, the heroine's severed arm not only constitutes proof of her demise and a narrative means of identification, but also calls to mind the cult of relics. In the Christian context mutilation stands as testimony to martyrdom, eliciting compassion for Christ's physical suffering and for the attacks sustained by his church ever since its inception. Clearly, Hélène's arm is not a relic, as it never works wonders. But it is miraculously preserved and reattached to her by a miracle. Like Christ's and the martyr's suffering, Hélène's mutilation and deprivation hold out the hope for physical resurrection and spiritual vindication in the end, as we will see in the context of Hélène's healing.²²⁵

C. Deprivation of the Body

In all analogues the accused queen either flees or is sent into exile. Most of them are cast out on a rudderless boat and given over to the mercy of the sea where they float aimlessly in a liminal state of limbo.²²⁶ They continue to be deprived of

²²⁵ The importance of physical integrity at the moment of the Last Judgement is discussed in C. Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," Critical Inquiry 22 (1995): 1-32, and in her The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity 200-1336 (New York: Columbia UP, 1996).

²²⁶ "Liminality," a term coined by the anthropologist Victor Turner, refers to an existence at the threshold of society, i.e. neither wholly integrated into it, nor fully excluded from it. For its use in a Christian context see Victor and Edith Turner, Image and Pilgrimage in

agency even after they have been safely brought to land.²²⁷ Yet, when these females leave the territory of male patriarchy and enter the realm of the sea, they seem to receive super-natural protection: all are rescued and, after a time in exile, reunited with their loved ones.²²⁸ These voyages recall the story of Jesus falling asleep on a stormy sea, placing his faith in God's protection while his disciples frantically try to rescue the boat.²²⁹ The rudderless boat is a well-known medieval Christian symbol, also used in pictorial representations. V. A. Kolve has read its meaning in the "Man of Law's Tale" as signifying on the four levels of medieval Christian allegory: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical. In this reading, it represents not only a mode of transportation, but also "the ship of the church," "the journey of the soul on the sea of the world," and, finally, the

Christian Culture (New York: Columbia UP, 1978).

In some of the stories, the exiled queen is found in a forest and does not travel in a rudderless boat, as e.g. in Offa I; see the classification of Suchier, Oeuvres poétiques xxiv.

²²⁷ There exists a good number of tales about women cast out to sea, and they can be read as embodying a cleansing ritual of the female, who is impure either due to childbirth, or because of an illicit love relationship, or, possibly, because of innate female obstinacy; see Francesca Sautman, "Une Femme à la Mer: Articulation d'un Thème Méconnu," CERMEIL, 1.2 (1984): 21-33. The young wife of Apollonius, who insists on accompanying him onto the ship and then gives birth to a daughter aboard, also fits this motif, even though she is ostensibly cast overboard because she appears to have died in childbirth. In this she resembles the young queen in the Mary Magdalen from the Digby MS, see D. Bevington, ed. Medieval Drama (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975, 687-753).

²²⁸ Marijane Osborn speaks of a kind of "empowerment" and relates the seafaring females to an ancient "Goddess of the Sea," Romancing the Goddess: Three Middle English Romances about Women (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1997).

²²⁹ This incident is related in Luke 8, 22-25.

"ship that carries the dead to the other world".²³⁰ This fourfold interpretation is possible also for the journey of Hélène's life, as I will show particularly with respect to her healing.

Other wrongly accused queens also go through a period of deprivation on the boat, but most of them later find shelter in fairly well situated families. Hélène, though, lives for over thirty years in poverty and anonymity. She fears persecution from her father and husband, and depends on washing laundry and begging for her living. When she is eventually invited to live in the papal palace, she refuses the offer. More than just enduring her fate she chooses a period of self-inflicted poverty, echoing the story of Saint Alexis.²³¹ As Alexis decides not to live in his parent's house, but to dwell under its stairs, so Hélène asks to live unrecognized under the stairs of the palace:

Que vous me laissiés, sire, s'y vous plest, demourer
 Droit dessous les degrés ou on doit chy monter,
 Et que de vo reliés me faichiés presenter, (10687-89)
 That you let me please, Sir, stay
 Right under the stairs where one has to go up,
 And that you make me a present of your left-overs.

²³⁰ See V. A. Kolve, Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1984).

²³¹ See Charles E. Stebbins, A Critical Edition of the 13th and 14th Centuries Old French Poem Versions of the Vie de Saint Alexis (Tuebingen: Niemeyer, 1974), esp. 684-89 of the fourteenth-century version. The appearance of the motif in La Belle Hélène is presumably no accident, since Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 766 not only contains La Belle Hélène, but also La vie de Saint Alexis, see p. 9.

This decision to live in voluntary deprivation distinguishes her from the heroines in other analogues and seems to be designed to illustrate her willingness to follow Christ in his humility. Her abjection prepares her for her final redemption, just as the Christian soul will be purged before its final resurrection, when the low shall be exalted and the last shall be made first.²³²

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, lawlessness, violence, natural disasters, and foreign attacks were seen as punishments for a church grown too proud and worldly. Calls for reform grew louder, urging a return to the humble and spiritual origins of Christian faith. Saint Francis (ca. 1181-1226) and others spent their lives wandering around in poverty, and eventually the church came to acknowledge and incorporate the mendicant orders, which grew strong in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Undoubtedly, H el ene emulates the ideals preached by them.²³³

That she is reconciled with her father after thirty-two years is no coincidence, as the poem points out that this is the number of years Christ lived, likewise in poverty, before being called back to His heavenly father. When Antoine hears that his

²³² See Luke 1:46-55.

²³³ That not all of them lived up to their own proclamations is clear from the criticism leveled at them, for example by Chaucer, who vividly describes the abuse of clerical prerogative by the friars in his Canterbury Tales.

daughter has been expelled from England on a rudderless boat, he recalls the years he searched for H el ene:

"XXXII ans y a, n'alay puis arestant,
 Que de nostre pais je m'alay desevrant
 Pour vostre corps ravoir, or ne vous truis noiant,"
 (14927-29)

"For thirty-two years I went without stop
 When I left our country as an undeserving one
 That I may find your body, now I find you drowned."

Amoury prays to Christ before his crucifixion:

"Au pois t'apela Dieu; XXXII ans regnas;
 Puissedy te vendy le traytre Judas;" (12369-70)
 "To heavy burden God called you; thirty-two years you
 reigned;
 Then the traitor Judas sold you."

It is pointed out that H el ene has dinner with the low and outcast: "Aveuques les cocquins le roine soupa," (6631, with the felons the queen ate dinner), which probably alludes to the habit of Jesus to mingle with them. The lowly and suffering element of Christian faith, pictured through the body of the female protagonist, provides a counterweight to the problematic self-definition of a Church, which attacks and kills in the name of

Christ.²³⁴ While the men seek to solidify and expand the power and glory of the Church, H  l  ne represents, like Christ himself, the humble and spiritual side of Christianity. Ironically, in the poem the men are called to further fighting while searching for her, so that she provides in her weakness and victimization the ultimate legitimization for the expansion of their wars.

Having faced the pollution of incest and endured physical mutilation, H  l  ne's body goes through a ritual of "purification," expressed in physical poverty and spiritual humility, before it will achieve unity again. Her willingness to endure deprivation even when she is offered a better life in the papal palace, thus prepares her for her healing.

D. Restoration of the Body

Like incest and mutilation the reattachment of H  l  ne's arm to her body can be read both theologically and sociologically. The microcosm of H  l  ne's body serves again as image for the macrocosm of Christianity: as the parts of her body are re-joined, so is her family, and even Christendom itself, unified. As (the English patron saint) Saint George had prophesied, H  l  ne (and Plaisance) will be found only after the delivery of Jerusalem from the infidel and the conversion of Castres (in

²³⁴ The Saracens are repeatedly attacking Rome, but the Christians are also trying to expand/recuperate their territory and Henry even wants to conquer Mecca (11217-19), before he is called away by the pope to help defend Castres (11220-36). The tensions between spiritual humility and expansive crusading are pointed out by Steven F. Kruger, "Racial/Religious and Sexual Queerness in the Middle Ages," Medieval Feminist Newsletter 16 (1993): 32-35.

Italy) and of Flanders to Christianity. He had told Coustant:

"Et dites a Henry d'Engleterre le lee
 Que quant Jherusalem avera conquestee
 Et dedens Lonbardie Castres qui est frumee
 Et il ara de Flandres conquise le contree,
 Adont ravera il Elaine s'espousee." (9116-20)

And tell Henry, the liege of England
 That when he will have conquered Jerusalem
 And in Italy Castres the fortified one
 And will have conquered the land of Flanders,
 Then will he have back H el ene his spouse.

The miracle of H el ene's healing is the apotheosis of the entire story: it attests to God's omnipotence and to the protection he grants his followers, underscoring once more the righteousness of His Church, which is now consolidated. H el ene's healing can then be read, as Kolve argued for the image of the rudderless boat, as signifying on various levels of meaning. Her body is literally made whole; the Roman church is healed by the reunification with Constantinople and Jerusalem; the soldiers of Christ are reconnected to the spiritual values of Christianity;

and at the end of life stands the reunion with the "Father".²³⁵

Pope Clement continues to rule in the eternal city, and the conversion of the Saracens is so complete, that one of them (Coustant) is even invested as the new Roman Emperor.²³⁶ Antoine has done his penance and returned to the fold, and his grandson Brice is installed on the throne of Constantinople, not only ruling under the control of the Roman Church but also engendering a future Western saint. In Tours, the institutional continuity of the Holy Roman Church is guaranteed through H el ene's male offspring, her son Saint Martin and, after him, her grandson Saint Brice. It is the right time to celebrate this general "healing" with the reattachment of H el ene's arm to her body.

E. The Body of the Other

The main plot, like the crusades themselves, is complicated and complemented when Oriental princesses fall in love with captive Christian knights. The enamored Saracen princess is a recurrent figure in the chansons de geste since the twelfth century cycle of Guillaume d'Orange, and there are about twenty other chansons in which a princess from the enemy camp saves a Frankish knight from certain death in return for his promise to

²³⁵ For Kolve see p. 135, n. 232.

²³⁶ In the story a converted Saracen seems more acceptable as Roman Emperor than the independent-minded Christian Hohenstaufers had been historically.

marry her.²³⁷ Usually she arms him and his companions, engineers their escape, and flees with them. In due course she is baptized and marries the knight. In her resourcefulness and ingenuity she calls to mind the skilled and cunning Sheherazade of One Thousand and One Nights, but unlike this Arab storyteller she betrays her own family and her country for a foreigner.²³⁸ In this she resembles more Medea, another eastern princess from the eastern shores of the Black Sea, who in medieval texts was usually portrayed as a dangerous sorceress. In fact, some of the Saracen ladies have intimate knowledge of miracle herbs, one owns a magical belt (though she soon loses it), and even Guillaume's faithful wife is once (falsely and maliciously) suspected of witchcraft.²³⁹

In *La Belle Hélène*, as in the other chansons de geste, the enamored Saracen princesses are consistently portrayed as beautiful and as white, even when they come from families of black monsters.²⁴⁰ Reviewing their stories in the light of Mary

²³⁷ See Guillaume d'Orange: Four Twelfth-Century Epics, trans. with an introduction by Joan Ferrante (New York: Columbia UP, 1974).

²³⁸ Charles A. Knudson, "Le thème de la princesse sarrasine dans *La Prise d'Orange*," Romance Philology 22 (1968-69): 449-62.

²³⁹ Floripas loses the belt in Fierabras, A. Kroeber and G. Servois, eds., (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1860). Guillaume's own sister insinuates that Orable knows witchcraft in Guillaume d'Orange.

²⁴⁰ Knudson recalls that Floripas was originally known as "soeur du gigantesque et épouvantable Fierabras," 453. "No resemblance exists between [Orable] and her father Desramez and her brothers Rainoart and Walegrape, all of them black Saracens. Her cousin Aenré is a cannibal"; see Jacqueline De Weever, Sheba's Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic (New York: Garland, 1998) 22, referring to Aliscans 6030-31.

Douglas's theory of the Body, the representations of these Saracen ladies show the same "cultural symbolism" at work that we have observed with regards to H el ene. If we understand the female Saracen Body symbolically as an image for its society, we need to ask how such physical attributes as skin color and sexuality signify.

As Norman Daniels and Paul Bancourt have shown, the Saracens presented in the chansons de geste are images of fiction created without any attempt at reality or objectivity.²⁴¹ The tales do not distinguish between actual countries and cultures: Saracens live in Hungary, Armenia, and even Scotland, as well as in Spain, and northern Africa, although the term originally seems to have referred specifically to the Muslims of Spain and the Near East.²⁴² In this fantasy world not all Saracens follow Mohammed, but even when they do, their princesses walk around unveiled, speak freely among the men, and are not kept in harems. Their physical beauty evokes the allures of an exotic Orient with its riches, spices, and fragrances. Like the Eastern cities to be conquered, the women are prizes to be obtained by the crusading knights; they are particularly desirable for younger

²⁴¹ For Norman Daniel see Islam and the West: The Making of an Image (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1960) and Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chanson de Geste (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1984). See also Paul Bancourt Les Musulmans dans les Chansons de Geste du Cycle du Roi (Marseille: Jeanne Lafitte, 1982). A more recent collection of articles is published in David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto, eds. Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

²⁴² See de Weever, Sheba's Daughters xxx.

sons of noble families who, due to the law of primogeniture, might not find wives of equal status in their home countries, as Georges Duby has shown.²⁴³

Like other tales from the Orient, the chansons de geste tend towards "wishful male thinking," and, as Scott D. Westrem has pointed out with regards to the narratives attributed to Marco Polo and Mandeville, they "idealize sexual freedom in the East."²⁴⁴ Saracens belong mentally to the "East," which basically functions as a literary synonym for the strange, for the "the monstrous, mysterious, exotic, sensual, [and] sexually deviant."²⁴⁵ This connection between the culturally and the sexually alien is also emphasized by Kathryn Lynch: "If the East is geographically and culturally Other to the West, it is also made sexually strange, especially acting as the site where gender distinctions are blurred, the threat of the feminine more explicitly acknowledged, and the relationship between the sexes subtly but fundamentally redefined."²⁴⁶

²⁴³ See George Duby, "Les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XIII^e siècle," in his Hommes et structures au moyen âge (Paris: Mouton, 1973) 213-25.

²⁴⁴ See Scott D. Westrem, "Medieval Western European Views of Sexuality Reflected in the Narratives of Travelers to the Orient," Acta 14 (1987): 141-56. For the discovery of the Other as a reflection on the Self see Scott D. Westrem, ed. Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination (New York: Garland, 1991). Similarly, Linda Lomperis, "Medieval Travel Writing and the Question of Race," Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 31.1 (2001): 147-64 reflects on how medieval travel documents "comment critically on the historical conditions out of which they emerged"; quote on 147.

²⁴⁵ K. Lynch, "East Meets West in Chaucer's Squire's and Franklin's Tales," Speculum 70 (1995): 530-51, quote on 532.

²⁴⁶ Lynch 532.

The projection of the desire for territorial conquest onto female bodies is not original to the chansons de geste. Bruce Holsinger points out that "western regimes have often eroticized the geographical spaces they seek to colonize as ethnically or racially other female bodies, bodies whose sexual topographies are designed to provoke a collective desire for penetration and domination within the public that encounters them."²⁴⁷

La Belle Hélène presents its audience with three Eastern princesses, all with French sounding names, but from entirely different geographic backgrounds: Plaisance is the daughter of the King of Jerusalem, Ludiane is the sister of the heathen king of Scotland (Gamaux, who had taken the throne from their converted brother Amaury), and Clariande the heiress of Bavaria. All three believe secretly in Christ, and Plaisance and Ludiane are not only seeking romance but also baptism when they fall in love with Frankish knights who were taken prisoners at their courts. Unlike the daughters of Christian families who are usually offered as rewards to the victor in battle, Saracen princesses take the initiative themselves and woo the apparently vanquished. They offer the prisoners freedom in return for a promise of marriage and flee with them. The ladies chose well: through marriage Ludiane becomes the empress of Constantinople, and Plaisance the empress of Rome. Clariande, the third Saracen

²⁴⁷ Bruce Holsinger, "The Color of Salvation: Desire, Death, and the Second Crusade in Bernard de Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*," The Tongue of the Fathers: Gender and Ideology in Twelfth-Century Latin, ed. David Townsend and Andrew Taylor (Philadelphia: U of

princess in the text, does not have the opportunity to rescue any knights and, while she also marries a Christian knight, she settles for an English count.

The stories of these three Saracen women are woven into the odyssey of the main protagonist, the Christian princess Hélène. Despite their otherness, the lives of Clariande and Plaisance mirror the life of the titular heroine at different stages: like Hélène, Clariande becomes the object of her father's incestuous desire, and ironically it is the father of Hélène who protects Clariande: Antoine, the sinful but repentant Christian ruler of Byzantium converts Graibaut, the Saracen king of Bavaria, and thus sets him on the path to spiritual and sexual purity. The Saracen's sexual deviance is here eradicated together with his cultural impurity, as the daughter's sexual purity is guarded through the choice of the "right" religion.

But the Saracen princesses are not only prey to impure desires; their own sexuality is tainted as well. Ludiane is the least offensive. She falls in love with Brice, one of her brother's Christian prisoners and extorts a promise of marriage from him in return for their freedom. Since Ludiane's forwardness is, at least partially, motivated by her desire to embrace Christianity, and presumably also because she is the sister of the brave warrior-martyr Amaury, the story still sees her fit to become the mother of the future Saint Brice.

Clariande's case is somewhat more questionable. She rules

Pennsylvania P, 1998) 165.

her father's kingdom by herself for a while and even risks war for her personal independence, as she initially refuses to accept a proposal of marriage from the worthy and Christian count of Gloucester who - unbeknownst to her - had earlier on saved the lives of H el ene and her twins. She agrees to the marriage only after he besieges her city and she runs out of provisions (5804-6044). Soon after her wedding she tries to seduce a young man at her court in an episode reminiscent of Potiphar's wife, who attempted to corrupt the young Israelite Joseph at the Pharaoh's court in Egypt (6064-6108).²⁴⁸ Clariande's love interest turns out to be the future Saint Martin, though, and she, like Potiphar's wife, remains unsuccessful.

By Christian standards Plaisance's adultery is even more scandalous; she is already married to one of her father's allies when she becomes pregnant by her captive Christian lover Coustant (8732-38 and 9107-08). She becomes separated from him during their escape and flees to Rome, where she is baptized (9248).

From that moment on, her life echoes parts of the odyssey of the Christian princess H el ene: like her, Plaisance has to flee from fabricated accusations, and like her she becomes separated from her infant son soon after his birth. Both women live alone in exile for many years, believing their sons dead before they are finally reunited with their families and reinstated into their proper social positions.

Despite the gulf between Plaisance's adultery on the one

²⁴⁸ This story is related in Genesis 39, 7-20.

hand, and H  l  ne's faithful loyalty to her husband on the other, the two women are set up as parallels, not opposites. There are differences in the degree of their deprivation (while H  l  ne is reduced to manual labor and begging, Plaisance assumes the more entrepreneurial life of running a pilgrims' hostel), but above all neither of them ever loses faith and both lead good Christian lives. In fact, it seems that the tale of another persecuted Christian princess, subject of the Crescentia cycle, has in La Belle H  l  ne been assigned to the Saracen princess Plaisance.²⁴⁹ Both Crescentia and Plaisance are framed and falsely accused of murder and, like Crescentia who becomes a healer in exile, the fugitive Plaisance tends to the sick in her hostel. Despite her betrayal and her treachery against her Saracen family, after her baptism Plaisance is no longer the "Other," and is in fact absorbed not only into the life, but also into the lore of Christian princesses.

Jacqueline de Weever, in Sheba's Daughters calls attention to the moral confusion in the chansons de geste, which applaud adultery and betrayal of the Saracens, while demanding absolute fidelity in marriage and unrestricted loyalty between lord and vassal from the Christians. She writes: "In their treachery the Saracen women suppress their own roots, detach their lives from their natural contexts, and change the equations between East and West, all at variance with traditional values as depicted in the

²⁴⁹ The Crescentia cycle is based on the motif of a young woman coveted by her brother-in-law, see II B.

Roland."²⁵⁰ Obviously the chansons de geste operate with a double moral standard: Saracen ladies make suitable spouses even though they are adulterous and forward, but Christian women have to be chaste and passive; Saracen ladies can betray their ruler and relatives, but Franks have to be absolute in their loyalty to king and kin. In the juxtaposition of Hélène and Plaisance this discrepancy becomes blatantly apparent.

On the other hand, the color of their skin underlines the similarity with the Frankish ladies, despite their differences. All three of the Saracen princesses are described as white. When Antoine first meets Clariande, she reminds him of his daughter Hélène, who was as white as a lily:

"Elle avoit les yeux vairs comme faucons polis,
Et s'estoit aussy blanche comme la fleur de lis." (107-08)
She had grey eyes like a tamed falcon
And was as white as the lily.

Clariande's father searches for his daughter with the fair face: "...Ou est ma fille alee que tant a le cler vis!" (4442)

"...Where did my daughter go who had such a fair face!"

Plaisance is whiter than wool or cotton:

"Et sa fame Plaisanche, qui tant ot bel menton
Et qui plus blanche estoit que laine ne cotton." (8830-31)
And his wife Plaisance, who had such a beautiful chin

²⁵⁰ De Weever, Sheba's Daughters 129.

And who was whiter than wool or cotton.

Ludiane is as white as a fairy with rose-colored cheeks:

"Regardés le pucelle qui est blanche que fee,
Qui est vaire et rians, vermelle et couloree." (14581-82)

Look at the maiden who is as white as a fairy
Who [has] grey {eyes} and is laughing, [has] red [lips] and
colored [cheeks].

Not all Oriental queens who befriend Christian knights in medieval literature are white, and neither are their children by these knights. There is for example the black queen Belakane in the twelfth century German poem Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach.²⁵¹ She falls in love with the white knight Gahmuret (who is also the father of Parzival). Their son Feirefiz is described as black-and-white patterned "like a parchment that has been written on" (15, 747, ll. 26-27), and as pied as a magpie (15, 748, ll. 6-7).

In the convention of the French chansons de geste the Saracen princesses who fall in love with a Christian are white. They do not become white through conversion, as does the Sultan of Damascus in the Middle English King of Tars, who is half white and half black until he turns white in baptism. Rather they are

²⁵¹ Wolfram von Eschenbach, Parzifal, ed. Karl Lachman, rev. ed. with a commentary by Eberhard Nellman (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994).

already white when the Christians meet them.²⁵² Yet French poets knew that Saracens were often darker in complexion: in the Prise d'Orange the Frankish knight Guillaume and his companion have to color their faces in order to infiltrate the Muslim city of Orange.

Applying Douglas's theory, we may understand that the white Saracen princesses are literally "incorporated" into Christianity before they are baptized, and their defections from their families and their "race" are already inscribed on their bodies. Their whiteness is a symbolic indication that they visibly belong to the West.²⁵³ Their color and their sexuality indicate metaphorically to the Christians that the border of the enemy territory is permeable, or, in Douglas's words, that "the boundaries are threatened or precarious."²⁵⁴ Like Guinevere's unfaithfulness, which signals that the security of the Arthurian

²⁵² Nicolette, daughter of the Emir of Carthage, is even described with blond curls, see Aucassin and Nicolette, ed. Anne Elizabeth Cobby, trans. Glyn S. Burgess. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, ser. A, 47. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

²⁵³ Where their coloring differs from that of their natural families, we must assume that their unusual whiteness is only visible to the conquerors, since otherwise it would reveal these ladies as traitors to their own societies.

²⁵⁴ Peter Stallybrass sees a need to "partially re-write Mary Douglas when she equates orifices and vulnerability... For if the boundaries are indeed vulnerable, they also suggest possible metamorphoses: transgressions of bodily boundaries map transformations of the psychic economy, of spatial division, and of the hierarchies of the social formation"; see Boundary and Transgression, quote on 15-16. Beckwith concurs, but it seems to me that Douglas, who emphasizes that society is dynamic and not static, could accommodate metamorphosis in her model as an instance of destabilization that occurs at the boundaries (of the body).

realm is compromised, the promiscuity of the Saracen princess leaves her country vulnerable when she offers her body to the invader. In the crusades, which are wars between different cultures, frequently (though not always) distinguished by warriors of different skin colors, the fact that she is willing to do so is indicated, even announced, by the hue of her skin.

In Latin Christian culture white is also the symbolic color of purity and thus, "the color of salvation," as Bruce Holsinger put it in his analysis of the sermons on the Song of Songs by Bernard of Clairvaux.²⁵⁵ Bernard's strenuous attempts in his 25th Sermon to explain the contiguity of black and beautiful in the Song of Songs betrays the tension he feels between the two attributes. Alluding to Psalms 118:54 and quoting from Ephesians 5:27, he explains that "the bride, despite the gracefulness of her person, bears the stigma of a dark skin, but this is only in the place of her pilgrimage. It will be otherwise when the Bridegroom in his glory will take her to himself 'in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.'"²⁵⁶ The black body is here the earthly body, which will become white at the moment of resurrection. In Christian theology, black and white take on moral and eschatological meaning.²⁵⁷ In this context, color is changeable with the state of salvation; it is thus not exactly

²⁵⁵ Holsinger 156-86.

²⁵⁶ The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, vol. 3, trans. Kilian Walsh, Cistercian Fathers Series 7, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1976) 52.

²⁵⁷ Holsinger 169.

the same as the indelible skin color of race. Holsinger warns "we should be cautious ... in seeking to illuminate twelfth-century constructions of 'white identity' in theoretical terms that arise from specific contemporary struggles over race, class, and ethnicity."²⁵⁸ But certainly white, not black, is the color to be desired whether for the soul at its resurrection, or for the lady at her meeting with the Christian knight, and it would be hard to ignore the essentialist undertones in the Christian cosmology that divides the world into white as beautiful and saved - over against black as ugly and damned. Even the fact that Christians see blackness as something that can - and should - be sloughed off at the resurrection or in baptism, underlines the symbolic importance of whiteness as the essence of goodness; there are no white monsters, just as the devil is always black.²⁵⁹

But why do the Saracen princesses not start out looking dark like their own people and then become white in baptism? It seems to me that we witness a situation similar to that of the early female Christian martyrs: the Saracen princesses defy their pagan fathers just like the "unruly virgins" of antiquity portrayed by Karen Winstead.²⁶⁰ These early Christian virgins

²⁵⁸ Holsinger 169.

²⁵⁹ Thomas Hahn, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World," JMEMS, 31 (2001): 1-38 also grapples with the notion of color, its allegorical meaning and its racial implications.

²⁶⁰ K. Winstead, Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997). Her second chapter is entitled "Unruly Virgins and the Laity, 1250-1400."

often hid their faith from their families and they were Christians by conviction, not by baptism. They closed their bodies to any pagan husbands and reserved them to Christ as their bridegroom. In similar fashion, the Saracen princesses reject the pagan gods and deny their bodies to their Saracen husbands. They, too, are Christians before they become baptized. But the chansons de geste rewrite the history of the antiquity: Saracen princesses will neither remain virgins nor die as martyrs; rather they will marry and contribute to the spread of Christianity. Instead of welcoming Christ as their bridegroom they welcome Christian husbands, thus solidifying the dynasties of the leading Western families.

Once they are integrated into Western culture, their fidelity to their Christian husbands signals the firm sealing of the new and expanded Western borders, as their whiteness signals their solidarity with their Christian husbands. The construction of their gender becomes adapted to the standards of Christian Franks.²⁶¹ The new order into which they become incorporated is more homogeneous and less fractious than the old one from which they came since they identify with their Christian husbands with whom they agree in faith and in color. They are not, and in a

²⁶¹ "As postcolonial feminism has taught us, gender serves the construction of cultural difference just as cultural difference determines the construction of gender," Sharon Kinoshita, "'Pagans are wrong and Christians are right': Alterity, Gender, and Nation in the *Chanson de Roland*," *JMEMS*, 31 (2001): 79-111, quote on 95. She analyzes the role of the Saracen queen Bramimonde in the Song of Roland, another "unruly" Saracen woman.

way have never been, "Other." In becoming empresses of Constantinople and Rome respectively, Ludiane and Plaisance fulfill their destiny and embody Latin Christianity at the highest level of its secular hierarchy. Color, then, seems to express above all cultural identity, and in the context of the crusades that means also religious identity. Expanding and guarding the borders of Western society requires white Saracen princesses to reject their "unnatural" ways of life in the East and to become integrated into the "white" Christian culture where they, according to their color, have belonged all along.

VI Conclusion

In drawing a parallel between sexual and religious pollution, La Belle Hélène justifies war against non-Christians. The image of sexual pollution in the poem is incest and, tellingly, it occurs twice in La Belle Hélène. It emanates as a threat not only from Christian Constantinople, but also from Saracen Bavaria, whose king is bewitched by a satanic pagan cult. The text specifically equates sexual pollution with religious pollution when it describes how the illicit desire of the Saracen king is exorcized together with his pagan spirit.

Mary Douglas defines pollution as that which disturbs order. She observes how in primitive societies after a trespass the communal order is restored through purification rituals using physical sacrifice, and she concludes that the body of the victim operates as a symbol for its society. Likewise, fears in and dangers to society are expressed in physical taboos, defined as pollution; and pollution is expressed in terms of the body. Douglas's definition of pollution opens up two questions fundamental to the understanding of La Belle Hélène: "whose order is disturbed?" and "what is the threat"? Both imply a third question: "Who defines 'order'"? The answers to these questions were obviously crucial during the crusades and still are in any conflict and any society.

In La Belle Hélène the image chosen for pollution is incest. Once sexual pollution is identified as image for

religious pollution, it becomes clear that incest symbolically represents the danger facing the Roman church from the Saracens, and also that from the rival Eastern church in Constantinople. The (female) body functions as a symbolic stand-in for its community, which in La Belle Hélène is Western Christianity.

The body mostly under attack in the poem is that of Hélène. There are three different types of assault on her body - incest, mutilation, and deprivation - before it is miraculously healed again. In the stories reviewed only Hélène is threatened with all three of these dangers, and only she chooses deprivation voluntarily:

<u>Story</u>	<u>incest/ pollution</u>	<u>mutilation</u>	<u>voluntary deprivation</u>	<u>restitution/ healing</u>
Offa I	yes	not queen	---	not queen
Manek.	yes	yes	---	yes
Mai& B.	yes	---	---	---
Emare	yes	---	---	---
Const.	---	---	---	---
Hélène	yes	yes	yes	yes

The tale of La Belle Hélène thus differs from those of the other heroines above in four significant ways:

- First, it contains four motifs that have specific physical expressions, and connects all four to the heroine's body.

- Second, only H el ene spends her days in exile in utter deprivation refusing to live in comfortable circumstances when she has the chance, while the other heroines find shelter with a wealthy family.

-Third, incest occurs not just once, but twice. It threatens not only the Christian protagonist but a Saracen princess as well. In the latter case, it is warded off through a religious exorcism ritual.

-Fourth, H el ene's story is embedded into an epic of holy wars. The fight against the Saracens, while only cursorily mentioned in other versions, is here given equal weight to the story of the heroine and is intrinsically interwoven with it.

Saint George foretells that the exiled queen will be found after the liberation of Jerusalem and the conversion of Flanders and Castres. Since she will be healed only after she is reunited with her family, the prophecy, like the symbolic use of incest, ties the fate of her body to that of religious and political events and validates a reading of the female body as cultural signifier.

Douglas's focus on the symbolic role of the body in purification ritual translates well to a Christian environment due to the importance of the Body in its theology. The central dogma of Christian doctrine is the incarnation of God and His physical resurrection after death. According to this belief Christ sacrificed His own body to redeem mankind, and His resurrection foreshadows that of the righteous.

God's humanity and His physical suffering had become the principal focus for the faithful during the late Middle Ages and expressed itself with particular poignancy in the appearance of psychosomatic symptoms and visions among mystics. This development opened up religion for women, who were traditionally seen as mainly physical beings, and who could now achieve direct union with their Savior without clerical mediation. This new validation of the body and, to a certain extent, of women led to a surge in female religious movements. Collections of female saints' vitae and the increasing veneration of Mary and Anne underlined this "feminization" of religion. At the same time, the importance of "Holy Mothers" also reflected the nobility's preoccupation with lineage, a concern visible in most of the tales.

Bodies of deceased holy people have been venerated by Christians as manifestations of divine power since the decline of the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages bones - and even clothing - from saints constituted tangible evidence of God's presence, promised relief from life's tribulations, and formed the basis of a widespread and lucrative cult of reliquiae. Hélène's arm and Manekine's hand are reminiscent of this cult; both are body parts miraculously preserved over years, and they are objects of healing miracles, even though they do not work miracles themselves.

Questions about the role of the body were crucial in the debate about resurrection. Would mutilated bodies be joined

together at the Last Judgment? If paradise is a tangible and perfect place where the faithful are rewarded with eternal life, will they have eternal and perfect bodies? Could the soul live on eternally without a body?

Despite the veneration of saintly corpses, the relation to the living body in Christianity has been ambiguous since the early days of the church, because Christianity promotes renunciation of the body as a means of achieving spiritual perfection. In the medieval hierarchy of perfection, virginity was the most highly praised virtue, and by the thirteenth century almost all female saints were depicted as young virgins, whether they had been so in the past or not. Marriage was instituted by God for the purpose of procreation, not for bodily pleasure. Some stories of married saints who did not consummate their union advocated abstinence even in marriage. La Belle Hélène, however, clearly emphasizes the importance of marriage and procreation, both in the person of Hélène and in the marriage of her son Brice.

Marital fidelity among Christians was taken for granted, and sexual pursuit by men gave women a chance to prove their purity. Hélène, even more than the other queens, has to avoid sexual advances from kings and beggars alike. Her chastity in exile stands in marked contrast to the reported promiscuity of the Saracen princesses in her story. Yet, even the bodies of those ladies declare their allegiance to the Christian God. All Saracen princesses secretly want to be baptized and choose

Christian knights as their lovers. All of them are as white as Frankish ladies, indicating their "true" Christian identity. Like H el ene, and like the early Christian martyrs, they resist a wrongful father, but instead of suffering persecution or death, they contribute to the strengthening of Christian secular and religious hierarchy. Once converted to Christianity they, too, lead chaste lives to protect their new faith and their lineage.

In rejecting the offer of comfortable shelter in the papal palace for the life of a beggar under its stairs, H el ene recalls Christ and his humility. In portraying the heroine's choice of voluntary poverty, La Belle H el ene seems sympathetic to the mendicants, who advocated the repudiation of material possessions and earthly pleasures. The poem thus joins the voices that criticized the established clergy for its wealth, simony, and lax morals. It appears to support the call for internal reforms of the church, while at the same time pursuing the aim of its male protagonists: the spread and consolidation of Christianity. It glorifies the battles that are fought by the men to preserve Christianity, while it simultaneously exemplifies the spiritual values of its faith through the physical suffering and redemption of H el ene.

The timing of H el ene's miraculous healing manifests the physical wholeness bestowed not only on her and on her family, but also on the Roman church and, finally, on all of Christendom. Her fate resembles that of the embattled church: both are attacked, rejected, and persecuted, and H el ene's healing holds

out hope for survival and redemption in the end.

The emphasis on the purity and integrity of her body reflects the preoccupation of the text with the consolidation of Christianity. Unification was urgent for a church divided between East and West as well as between Rome and Avignon, a church that was defending itself not only against the infidel, but also against the assertion of secular power. La Belle Hélène recognizes that the crusades cannot be won by a divided Christendom and recommends the centralization of political leadership and clerical hierarchy under the pope in Rome. The poem thus takes the side of the church over that of the court, but shows a favorable image of Western nobility and recognizes its interest in lineage. Once united under the Roman pope, Western Christianity could then hope to regain its wholeness.

When the poem closes, the threat of the infidel has been contained and Constantinople is no longer in conflict with Rome. Hélène's story begins and ends with the same Pope in Rome, and the future of the Western church is secured through her male offspring, Saint Martin and Saint Brice. Having triumphed over paganism, patriarchy has become safely installed, and it is time for the women to retreat to the margins. The Roman Church and its male clergy are at last in a position to decide what is acceptable to the internal order and what will be declared as pollution.

Appendix

Analogues to *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*

prepared on the basis of H.S. OeuP 25-33, M.S. ChaC 69-70, C.R. Cdeg 73-104. The sequence follows C.R. Cdeg.

1. The Vitae Duorum offarum.²⁶² Latin, early 13th century.
2. Mai und Beaflor.²⁶³ German, 1257-59.
3. La Manekine.²⁶⁴ French, 13th century.
4. Jansen Enikel, Weltchronik.²⁶⁵ German, 1280.
5. Jehan Maillart, Roman du Comte d'Anjou.²⁶⁶ French, early 14th century.

²⁶² The oldest known manuscript is British Library, MS Cotton Nero D I (fols. 2-25), edited by William Wats in the Liber Additamentorum to his Matthaei Parisiensis Chronica Majora (London 1640), repr. Furnivall, Brock, and Clouston, 73-84. For a critique of that reprint see Roussel, Contes de geste 75.

²⁶³ Repr. Dichtungen des deutschen Mittelalters, Bd. 7 (Leipzig: Goeschen'sche Verlagshandlung, 1848).

²⁶⁴ Hermann Suchier, ed., Oeuvres poétiques de Philippe de Remi, Sire de Baumanoir, 2 vols. (Paris: Didot, 1884-85) vol 1, 25-65.

²⁶⁵ Philip Strauch, ed., Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 30, Deutsche Chroniken, 3, (Hanover, 1900). Lines 26677-27356 tell the story of the daughter of the King of Russia.

²⁶⁶ Ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Champion, 1931). (Some versions carry the title Le Roman de la Comtesse d'Anjou).

5. Jean Gobi, Jr., Scala Coeli.²⁶⁷ Latin, between 1323 and 1330.
6. Henmannus Bononiensis, Viaticum Narrationum.²⁶⁸ Latin, second half 14th century.
7. Life of Constance.²⁶⁹ Anglo-Norman, first half 14th century.
9. Lion de Bourges.²⁷⁰ French, mid 14th century.
10. Ystoria Regis Franchorum et filie in qua adulterium comitere voluit.²⁷¹ Latin, copied in 1370.
11. Giovanni Fiorentino, Il Pecorone.²⁷² Italian, 1378.
12. Istoria de la fiyla del rey d'Ungria.²⁷³ Catalan, approx. mid 14th century.

²⁶⁷ Collection of 1000 exempla. Ed. Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991). Translation of and commentary to exemplum 180 "La Fille du Comte de Poitou" by Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu in Jacques Berlioz, Claude Bremond, and Catherine Velay Vallantin eds., Formes médiévales du conte merveilleux (Paris: Stock/Moyen Age, 1989) 113-21.

²⁶⁸ Das Viaticum Narrationum des Henmannus Bononiensis. Ed. A. Hilka, Beitraege zur lateinischen Erzaehlungsliteratur des Mittelalters 3 (Berlin: Weidman, 1935). This is another collection of exempla.

²⁶⁹ Nicholas Trivet, Les Chroniques écrites pour Marie d'Angleterre, fille d'Edward I, Oxford MS Magdalen 45, repr. M. Schiauch, "The Man of Law's Tale," in Bryan and Dempster 155-206.

²⁷⁰ Lions de Bourges, poème épique du XIVE siècle, eds. W. Kibler, J.L.G. Picherit, Thelma Fenster (Geneva: Droz, 1980) 2 vols. Contains the story of Joieuse, daughter of the King of Cyprus.

²⁷¹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 8701 from 1370, ed. H. Suchier, Romania, 39 (1910): 61-76.

²⁷² The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni, trans. E.G. Walters (London: Priv. print for Soc. of Bibliophiles, 1901). The pertinent passage: Tenth Day, first novel.

²⁷³ R. Aramon i Serra, ed., Novel-letes exemplars, "Els nostres clasics" 48 (Barcelona: Editorial Barcino, 1934).

13. La Novella della figlia del re di Dacia.²⁷⁴ Italian.
Only manuscript extant dates from the 15th century, but probably composed in the previous century.
14. Comoedia sine nomine.²⁷⁵ Latin, 14th century.
15. Emare.²⁷⁶ Middle English, end 14th century.
16. Hans von Buehel, Die Koenigstochter von Frankreich.²⁷⁷
German, 1401.
17. Historia della regina Oliva.²⁷⁸ Italian, early 15th century.
18. De Alixandre, roy de Hongrie, qui volut espouser sa fille.²⁷⁹ French, mid 15th century.
19. Istoria de la filla del emperador Constasti.²⁸⁰
Catalan, mid 15th century.

²⁷⁴ Ed. Alessandro Wesslofsky (Pisa, 1886).

²⁷⁵ This Latin play is published in Emile Roy, Etudes sur le théâtre français du XIVE et du XVe siècle: la comédie sans titre publiée pour la première fois d'après le manuscrit latin 8163 de la Bibliothèque nationale et les miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages (1902; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1975). For the miracles referred to see Gaston Paris and Ulysse Robert, eds. Les Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages (Paris: SATF, 1876-1893) vol. V, 1-88. This edition is based on Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS f. fr. 819 and 820, called "MS Cangé" by Roy.

²⁷⁶ British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A II, ed. A. B. Gough, Emare (London: Sampson Low Marston, 1901), and also Edith Rickert, ed., The Romance of Emare (London: Oxford UP, 1906).

²⁷⁷ Ed. Theodor Merzdorf, Des Bueheler's Koenigstochter von Frankreich (Oldenburg: Schulze, 1867).

²⁷⁸ For sources and summary of the poem see H. Suchier, Oeuvres poétiques 46. Adapted for the stage as "Rappresentazione di Santa Uliva," in Sacre Rappresentazioni dei Secoli XIV, XV, e XVI, ed. Alessandro d'Ancona (Florence, 1872) vol. 2, 235-315.

²⁷⁹ In Roy 275-79.

20. Bartolomeo Fazio, De Origine inter Gallos et Britannos Belli Historia.²⁸¹ Latin, late 15th century.
21. Gutierre Díez de Games, El Victorial: Crónica de Don Pero Niño.²⁸² Spanish, mid 15th century.
22. Miracoli de la gloriosa Verzene Maria.²⁸³ Italian, 15th century.
23. Les Faciétieuses Nuits de Straparole.²⁸⁴ French, 1550.
24. Giambattista Basile, Lo cunto de li cunti.²⁸⁵ Italian, 1575-1672.

²⁸⁰ In Aramon i Serra 61-69.

²⁸¹ In Roy 262-74.

²⁸² Ed. Ramón Iglesia (Madrid: Signo: 1936). The chapter "Origen de la lucha entre Francia e Inglaterra" (p.73-79) contains only one flight of the mutilated heroine, who marries the brother of the king of England. Her father, the Duke of Guiana, never forgives her and at his death leaves his duchy to the king of France, which causes the Hundred Years War between the two nations.

²⁸³ The summary in H. Suchier, Oeuvres poétiques, 50, refers, among others, to one version from Vicenza (1475) and another from Trivisi (1479). A dramatized version appears in Alessandro d'Ancona, Sacre Rappresentazioni dei Secoli XIV, XV, e XVI (Florence, 1872), vol. III, 317-59.

²⁸⁴ Trans. J. Louveau and P. de Larivey (1585. Repr. Paris: P. Jannet, 1858). Pertinent passage: First night, fourth tale, "Histoire du roi Thibaud." Roussel includes this story as analogue, but Suchier did not, probably because the plot line differs somewhat; see Roussel Contes de geste 126-27.

²⁸⁵ Translation into modern Italian by Benedetto Croce, Il Pentamerone, ossia la Fiaba delle Fiabe (Bari: La Terza, 1925) 2 vols. For the pertinent passage see Third Day, second tale.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

De Alixandre, roy de Hongrie, qui volut espouser sa fille. In Roy
275-79.

D'Ancona, Alessandro, ed. Sacre Rappresentazioni dei secoli XIV,
XV, e XVI. vol 3. Florence, 1872.

Aramon i Serra, R., ed. Novel-letes exemplars. "Els nostres
clasics" 48, Barcelona: n.p., 1934.

Aucassin and Nicolette. Ed. Anne Elizabeth Cobby, trans. Glyn S.
Burgess. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, ser. A,
47. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1988.

Bartolomeo Fazio. De Origine inter Gallos et Britannos Belli
Historia. In Roy 262-74.

La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, chanson de geste du XIVE
siècle. Ed. Claude Roussel. Geneva: Droz, 1995.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. The Decameron. Trans. Mark Musa and Peter
Bondanella. New York: Norton, 1982.

Buehel, Hans von. Die Koenigstochter von Frankreich. Ed. J. F. L.
Theodor Merzdorf as Des Bueheler's Koenigstochter von
Frankreich. Oldenburg: Schulze, 1867.

La Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne et de Godefroid de Bouillon. Ed.
Célestin Hippeau. 2 vols. 1874. Repr. Geneva: Slatkine
Reprints, 1969.

La Chanson de Floovant. Ed. Frédéric Hewitt Bateson. 1936. Repr.
Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1973.

La Chanson de Jérusalem. Ed. Nigel R. Thorp. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1992.

Comoedia sine nomine. In Roy 1-192.

A Critical Edition of the 13th and 14th Centuries Old French Poem Versions of the Vie de Saint Alexis. Ed. Stebbins, Charles E. Tuebingen: Nedermeyer, 1974.

Enikel, Jansen. Weltchronik. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, vol. 30. Deutsche Chroniken 3. Ed. Philipp Strauch, 1900. Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung. Repr. Munich: n.p., 1980.

Les Faciétieuses Nuits de Straparole. Trans. J. Louveau and P. de Larivey. 1585. Repr. Paris: P. Jannet, 1858.

Fierabras, chanson de geste. Eds. A. Kroeber and G. Servois. Paris: F. Vieweg, 1860.

"La Fille du comte de Poitou," trans. M.-A. Polo de Beaulieu. In Formes médiévales du conte merveilleux. Ed. Jacques Berlioz, Claude Bremond, and Catherine Velay-Vallantin. Paris: Stock/Moyen Age, 1989. 113-21.

Giambattista Basile. Lo Cunto de li Cunti. 1636. Trans. Benedetto Croce as Il Pentamerone, ossia la Fiaba delle Fiabe. Bari: La Terza, 1925.

Gesta Romanorum: Entertaining Stories. Trans. Charles Swan. London: Routledge, 1924.

Gower, John. The Complete Works of John Gower. Ed. G. C. Macaulay. 4 vols. 1901. Repr. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968.

---. Confessio Amantis. Ed. Russell Peck. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1980.

- Grimm, Jakob and Wilhelm, comps. and eds. Kinder- und Hausmaerchen. Repr. Stuttgart: Unipart, 1983.
- Guillaume d'Orange: Four Twelfth Century Epics. Trans. and intro. Joan Ferrante. New York: Columbia UP, 1974.
- Isidore of Seville, Etymologiae Sive Origines. Ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols., 1911. Repr. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962.
- Istoria de la filla del emperador Constasti. Repr. Aramon i Serra 61-100.
- Istoria de la fiyla del rey d'Ungria. Repr. Aramon i Serra 29-60.
- Jacobus de Voraigne. The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints. Trans. William Granger Ryan. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.
- Les Lais de Marie de France. Ed. Jean Rychner. Paris: Champion, 1966.
- Lion de Bourges. Eds. Kibler, W. W., J. L. G. Picherit, and Thelma S. Fenster. Geneva: Droz, 1980.
- Mai und Beafloer. Ed. Pfeiffer. Dichtungen des Deutschen Mittelalters 7. Leipzig: Goeschen'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1848.
- La Manekine. Trans. Christiane Marchello-Nizia. Paris: Stock-Plus, 1980.
- Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnage. Ed. Gaston Paris and Ulysse Robert, 5 vols. Paris: SATF, 1880. Repr. Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966.
- "Miracoli de la gloriosa Verzene Maria." Repr. as "Rappresentazione di Stella." In d'Ancona 317-59.

- La Novella della figlia del re di Dacia. Ed. Alessandro Wesslofsky, Pisa, 1886.
- The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni. Trans. E. G. Walters. London: private print for Society of Bibliophiles, 1901.
- "Rappresentazione di santa Uliva." In d'Ancona 235-315.
- Rickert, Edith, ed. The Romance of Emare. London: Oxford UP, 1906.
- Le Roman du Comte d'Anjou. Ed. Mario Roques, Paris: Champion, 1931.
- Roy, Emile. Etudes sur le théâtre français du XI^e et du XII^e siècle: la comédie sans titre publiée pour la première fois d'après le manuscrit latin 8163 de la Bibliothèque nationale et les miracles de Notre Dame par personnages. 1902. Repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1975.
- Scala Coeli. Ed. Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu. Sources d'histoires médiévales. Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991.
- Suchier, Hermann, ed. Oeuvres poétiques de Philippe de Remi, Sire de Beaumanoir. 2 vols. Paris: Didot, 1884-85.
- , ed. "Le Siège de Castres." Romanische Studien 1 (1875): 589-93.
- , ed. Ystoria Regis Franchorum et filie in qua adulterium comitere voluit. Romania 39 (1910): 61-76.
- Tristan de Nanteuil. Ed. K. V. Sinclair. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971.
- Trivet, Nicholas. "The Life of Constance." Ed. Margaret Schlauch "The Man of Law's Tale." In Bryan and Dempster 155-206 (see "Secondary Sources").

Das Viaticum Narrationum des Henmannus Bononiensis. Ed. A. Hilka.

Beitraege zur Lateinischen Erzaehlungsliteratur des
Mittelalters, 3. Berlin: Weidman, 1935.

El Victorial: Crónica de Don Pero Niño by Gutierre Díez de Games.

Ed. Ramón Iglesia (Madrid: Signo, 1976).

La Vie de Sainte Marie l'Egyptienne: versions en ancien et en

Moyen Français. Ed. Peter F. Dembrowski. Geneva: Droz,
1977.

Vitae Duorum Offarum. Ed. William Wats. Matthaei Pariensis

Chronica Majora, Liber Additamentorum. London, 1641-44.

Partial repr. Furnivall, Brock, and Clouston 73-84 (see
"Secondary Sources").

Wallenskoeld, Axel, ed. Florence de Rome, chanson d'aventure du
premier quart du XIve siècle. 2 vols. Paris: SATF, 1907-09.

Wolfram von Eschenbach. Parzifal. Ed. Karl Lachman. Rev. ed.

Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994.

Secondary Sources

Aarne, Antti. The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and
Bibliography. Trans. and enlarged by Stith Thompson. 1928.

New York: Lenox Hill, 1971.

Archibald, Elizabeth. Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and

Renaissance Themes and Variations. Cambridge, UK: D.S.

Brewer, 1991.

----. "The Flight from Incest: Two Late Classical Precursors of
the Constance Theme." Chaucer Review 20 (1986): 259-72.

- Ashley, Kathleen and Pamela Sheingorn. Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1990.
- . Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999.
- Bakhtin, Michael. Rabelais and His World. Trans. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984.
- Bancourt, Paul. Les Musulmans dans les Chansons de Gestes du Cycle du Roi. Marseille: Jeanne Lafitte, 1982.
- Barkan, Leonard. Nature's Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World. New Haven: Yale UP, 1975.
- Barraclough, Geoffrey. The Medieval Papacy. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968.
- Beckwith, Sarah. Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings. London: Routledge, 1993.
- . "Ritual, Theatre, and Social Space in the York Corpus Christi Cycle." In Hanawalt and Wallace 63-86.
- Beidler, Peter, ed. Masculinities in Chaucer: Approaches to Maleness in the Canterbury Tales and Troilus and Criseyde. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1998.
- Bennet, Philip E. "The Storming of the Other World: the Enamoured Muslim Princess and the Evolution of the Legend of Guillaume d'Orange." In Guillaume d'Orange and the Chanson de Geste. Essays presented to Duncan McMillan. Ed. Wolfgang van Emden et al. Reading: U of Reading P, 1984. 1-14.
- Bentley, Michael, ed. Companion to Historiography. London:

- Routledge, 1997.
- Bernier, H el ene. La Fille aux Mains Coup ees: Conte-type 706.
Qu eb ec: Les Presses de l'Universit e Laval, 1971.
- Bevington, David, ed. Medieval Drama. Boston: Houghton Mifflin,
1975.
- Biddick, Kathleen. The Shock of Medievalism. Durham: Duke UP,
1998.
- Black, Nancy B. "La Belle H el ene de Constantinople and Crusade
Propaganda at the Court of Philip the Good." Fifteenth
Century Studies 26 (2001): 42-51.
- Blanks, David, R. ed. Images of the Other: Europe and the Muslim
World Before 1700. Cairo: American U in Cairo P, 1997.
- Blanks, David R. and Michael Frassetto, eds. Western Views of
Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of
Other. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Bloch, Howard, R. and Stephen G. Nichols, eds. Medievalism and
the Modernist Temper. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.
- Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate and Timea Szell, eds. Images of
Sainthood in Medieval Europe. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.
- Bohler-R egnier, Danielle, gen. ed. Splendeurs de la Cour de
Bourgogne. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1995.
- Bolte, Johannes and George Pol ivka. Anmerkungen zu den Kinder-
und Hausmaerchen der Brueder Grimm. 2 vols. Leipzig:
Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913-32.
- Bonenfant, Paul. Philippe Le Bon. Brussels: Renaissance du Livre,
1955.

- Bossuat, Robert. "Florent et Octavien: chanson de geste du XIVE siècle." Romania 73 (1952): 290-93 and 314-15.
- Bridenthal, Renate and Claudia Koonz, eds. Becoming Visible: Women in European History. 1977. Repr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
- Brochon, Paul. Le livre de colportage en France depuis le XVIIe siècle. Paris: Gruend, 1954.
- Brown, Peter. The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- . The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981.
- . Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity. Berkeley: U of California P, 1982.
- Bryan, W. F. and Germaine Dempster, eds. Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. 1941. New York: Humanities P, 1958.
- Burns, Jane E., Sarah Kay, Roberta L. Krueger, and Helen Solterer. "Feminism and the Discipline of Old French Studies: *Une Bele Disjointure*." In Bloch and Nichols 225-66.
- Butler, Judith. Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex". New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Bynum, Carolyn Walker. Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on

- Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
- . Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages. Berkeley: U of California P, 1982.
- . The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity 200-1336. New York: Columbia UP, 1996.
- . "Why All the Fuss About the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," Critical Inquiry 22 (1995): 1-32.
- Carpenter, Jennifer and Sally-Beth MacLean, eds. The Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women. Urbana, Ill.: U of Illinois P, 1995.
- Cazelles, Brigitte. The Lady as Saint: a Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1991.
- Chance, Jane, ed. Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1996.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. The Canterbury Tales. In The Riverside Chaucer. Gen. ed. Larry Benson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, ed. The Postcolonial Middle Ages. New York: St. Martin's P, 2000.
- Coleman, Joyce. Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Crécy, Marie-Claude de. "La Belle Hélène de Constantinople." In Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises, Le Moyen Age. Eds. G. Hasenohr and M. Zink. 1964. Paris: Livres de Poches, rev.

- ed. 1992. 137-38.
- Daeumling, Heinrich. Studie ueber den Typus des 'Maedchens ohne Haende' innerhalb des Konstanze-Zyklus. Diss. Univ. of Munich, 1912.
- Dagenais, John and Margaret G. Greer. "Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction." JMEMS 30 (2000): 431-48.
- Daniel, Norman. Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1984.
- . Islam and the West: The Making of an Image. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1960.
- Davis, Kathleen, "Behind the Veil: The Media, the Middle Ages, and Orientalism Now." In Cohen 105-22.
- Delany, Sheila. Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth Century England. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
- . Writing Woman: Women Writers and Women in Literature, medieval to modern. New York: Schocken Books, 1983.
- Dictionnaire de théologie catholique. Eds. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amman (Paris: n.p., 1927).
- Dinshaw, Carolyn. Chaucer's Sexual Poetics. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.
- Dixon, Mimi. "'This Body of Mary': 'Femynyte' and 'Inward Mythe' in the *Digby Mary Magdalen*." Medievalia 18 (1995): 221-44.
- Douglas, Mary. Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.
- . Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. 1966. New York: Praeger, 1996.

- Dronke, Peter. Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of the Texts from Perpetua (†203) to Marguerite Porete (†1310). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Duby, Georges. "Les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XIIe siècle." In Hommes et structures au Moyen Age. Paris: Mouton, 1973.
- . Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages. Trans. Jane Dunnett. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- Duffy, Eamon. Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997.
- Durling, Nancy. "Rewriting Gender: *Yde et Olive* and the Ovidian Myth." Romance Language Annual (1989): 256-62.
- Eisler, Riane. Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995.
- Engen, John van, ed. The Past and Future of Medieval Studies. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1994.
- Erler, Mary and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds. Women and Power in the Middle Ages. Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1988.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1976.
- Farmer, Sharon. Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.
- Fenster, Thelma S. "Beaumanoir's *La Manekine*: KinD(r)ead: Incest, Doubling and Death." American Imago 39 (1982): 41-58.
- Ferrante, Joan. Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante. New York: Columbia UP, 1975.

- Fisher, John H. John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer. New York: New York UP, 1964.
- Fisher, Sheila and Janet E. Halley, eds. Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings: Essays in Feminist Contextual Criticism. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1989.
- Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality. Trans. R. Hurley. 3 vols. New York: Pantheon, 1980-86.
- Fouracre, Paul. "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography." Past and Present 127 (1990): 3-38.
- Frantzen, Allen J., ed. Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies. Albany: State U of New York P, 1991.
- Frocheur, Francis. "Notice sur le Roman de la Belle Hélène de Constantinople," Bulletin de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres de Bruxelles. 12 [1] (1845): 273-85.
- Friedman, John Block, Kristen Mosler Figg, Scott D. Westrem, and Gregory Guzman, eds. Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia. New York: Garland, 2000.
- Furnivall, F.J., Edmund Brock, and W. A. Clouston, eds. Originals and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. London: Chaucer Society, 1872.
- Fuss, Diana. Essentially Speaking. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt. Practicing New Historicism. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.
- Gallagher, Catherine and Thomas Laqueur, eds. The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth

- Century. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987.
- Gnarra, Irene. Philippe de Remi's La Manekine: Text, Translation, Commentary. New York: Garland, 1988.
- Gold, Penny Schine. The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985.
- Goodich, Michael. Violence and Miracle in the Fourteenth Century: Private Grief and Public Salvation. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995.
- Gough, Alfred B. "The Constance Saga." Palaestra 23 (1902): 1-84.
- , ed. Emare. London: Low Marston, 1901.
- . On the Middle English Metrical Romance of Emare. Kiel: Fiencke, 1900.
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich and Jeffrey T. Schnapp, trans. and eds. "Preface to *Kinder-und Hausmaerchen gesammelt durch die Brueder Grimm* (1819)." In Bloch and Nichols 475-92.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Gurevich, Aaron J. Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages. Ed. and trans. Jana Howlett. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Hadley, Dawn A. Masculinity in Medieval Europe. London and New York: Longman, 1999.
- Hahn, Thomas, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World," JMEMS 31 (2001): 1-38.
- Hanawalt, Barbara A. and David Wallace, eds. Bodies and Disciplines: Intersectins of Literature and History in

Fifteenth-Century England. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P,
1996.

Hansen, Elaine Tuttle. "Fearing for Chaucer's Good Name."

Exemplaria 2 (1990): 23-36.

---. "The Feminization of Men in Chaucer's Legend of Good
Women." In Fisher and Halley 51-70.

Hajdu, Robert. "The Position of Noblewomen in the Pays de
Coutumes, 1100-1300." Journal of Family History 5.2 (1980):
122-44.

Heintze, Michael. "Helene von Konstantinopel," Enzyklopaedie des
Maerchens. Handwoerterbuch zur historischen und
vergleichenden Erzaehlforschung. Vol. 6. Berlin: Walter de
Gruyter, 1977.

Holsinger, Bruce. "The Color of Salvation, Desire, Death, and the
Second Crusade in Bernard de Clairvaux's Sermons on the
Song of Songs." In The Tongue of the Fathers: Gender and
Ideology in Twelfth-Century Latin. Ed. David Townsend and
Andrew Taylor. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1998.
156-86.

Howard, Donald. The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of
the World. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966.

James, Merwyn. "Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late
Medieval English Town." Past and Present 98 (1983): 3-29.

Jauss, Hans Robert. Toward an Aesthetic of Reception. Trans.
Timothi Bakhti, intro. Paul de Man. Minneapolis: U of
Minnesota P, 1982.

- Kantorowicz, Ernst H. The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.
- Karl, Louis. "Florence de Rome et la Vie de deux saints de Hongrie." Revue des Langues Romanes 53 (1909): 163-80.
- Kastan, D. S. and Peter Stallybrass, eds. Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Kay, Sarah. The Chanson de Geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1995.
- Kay, Sarah and Miri Rubin, eds. Framing Medieval Bodies. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994.
- Knudson, Charles A. "Le thème de la princesse sarrasine dans la *Prise d'Orange*." Romance Philology 22 (1968-69): 449-62.
- Koehler, Erich. Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der hoefischen Epik. 1956. Rev. ed. Tuebingen: Niemeyer, 1970.
- Kolve, V. A. Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1984.
- Krappe, Alexander Haggerty. "La Belle Hélène de Constantinople." Romania 63 (1927): 324-53.
- . "Florent et Octavien." Romania 64 (1939): 365-66.
- Krautheimer, Richard. Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980.
- Kruger, Steven. "Conversion and Medieval Sexual, Religious, and Racial Categories." In Lochrie, McCracken, and Schultz 158-79.
- , "Racial/Religious and Sexual Queerness in the Middle Ages."

MFN 16 (Fall 1993): 32-35.

Laqueur, Thomas. The Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud.

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990.

---. "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology." In Gallagher and Laqueur 1-41.

Lees, Clare A. ed. Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994.

Lefkowitz, Lori Hope, ed. Textual Bodies: Changing Boundaries of Literary Presentation. New York: SUNY P, 1997.

Le Goff, Jacques. The Medieval Imagination. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.

---. Pour un autre Moyen Age: temps, travail et culture en Occident. Paris: Gallimard, 1977.

Legros, Huguette. "Parenté naturelle, alliance, parenté spirituelle: de l'inceste à la sainteté." SENEFIANCE 26 (1986): 511-48.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. The Elementary Structures of Kinship. Trans. James H. Bell et al. Boston: Beacon, 1969.

Lewis, Suzanne. The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987.

Lifshitz, Felice. "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative." Viator 25 (1994): 95-113.

Lochrie, Karma. "The Language of the Flesh: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse." In Frantzen 115-40.

Lochrie, Karma, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, eds. Constructing Medieval Sexuality. Minneapolis: U of

- Minnesota P, 1997.
- Lombard-Jourdan, Anne. Fleur de Lis et Oriflamme: signes célestes du Royaume de France. Paris: Presses de CNRS, 1991.
- Lomperis, Laura and Sarah Stanbury, eds. Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature. Philadelphia: U of Philadelphia P, 1993.
- . "Medieval Travel Writing and the Question of Race." JMEMS 31 (2001): 147-164.
- Luard, Henry G., ed. Matthaei Parisiensis Monachi Sancti Albani Chronica Majora. 7 vols. Rolls Series (CM). London, 1882. Repr. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprints, 1964.
- Luecke, E. "Das Leben der Constance bei Trivet, Gower, and Chaucer." Anglia, XIV (1892): 77-112 and 149-85.
- Lynch, Kathryn. "East Meets West in Chaucer's Squire's and Franklin's Tales." Speculum 70 (1995): 530-51.
- Maddox, Donald and Sara Sturm Maddox, eds. Melusine of Lusignan: Founding Fiction in Late Medieval France. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1996.
- McCracken, Peggy. "The Body Politic and the Queen's Adulterous Body in French Romance." In Lomperis and Stanbury 38-54.
- . The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1998.
- McNamara, Jo Ann. "The Need to Give." In Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Szell 199-204.
- McNamara, Jo Ann and Suzanne Wemple. "The Power of Women through

- the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100." Feminist Studies 1 (1973): 126-41.
- Mehl, Dieter. The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969.
- Menocal, Maria Rosa. The Arabic role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1987.
- Metlitzki, Dorothee. The Matter of Araby in Medieval England. New Haven: Yale UP, 1977.
- Montrose, Louis. The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural politics of the Elizabethan Theatre. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.
- Muir, Edward and G. Ruggiero, eds. Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective. Trans. M. Galucci. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990.
- Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B. ed. Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages. New York: Garland, 1995.
- New Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967-79.
- Nichols, Stephen G. "Deflections of the Body in the Old French Lay," Stanford French Review 14.1-2 (1990): 27-50.
- , ed. "The New Philology." Speculum 65 (1990): 1-108.
- Nicholson, Peter. "Chaucer Borrows from Gower: The Sources of the *Man of Law's Tale*." In Chaucer and Gower: Difference, Mutuality, Exchange. Ed. R. F. Yeager. Victoria, BC: U of Victoria P, 1991. 85-99.
- Nisard, Charles. Histoire des Livres Populaires. 2nd ed. 2 vols.

- Paris: Amyot, 1854.
- Noble, Thomas F. X. and Thomas Head, eds. Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Latin Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995.
- Osborn, Marijane. Romancing the Goddess: Three Middle English Romances about Women. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997.
- . Mary Through the Ages: Her Place in the History of Culture. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996.
- Perrault, Charles. Contes. Ed. Marc Soriano. Paris: Flammarion, 1989.
- Perry, B. E. The Ancient Romances: a Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins. Berkeley: U of California P, 1967.
- Petroff, Elizabeth A. ed. Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.
- Puymaigre, Theodore. "La Fille aux Mains Coupées." Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 10 (1884): 193-209.
- Reames, Sherry L. "St. Martin of Tours in the 'Legenda Aurea' and Before." Viator 12 (1981): 131-46.
- Reardon, B. P. ed. and trans. The Collected Ancient Greek Novels. Berkeley: U of California P, 1989.
- Régnier-Bohler, Danielle, gen. ed. Splendeurs de la Cour de Bourgogne. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1995.
- Rickert, Edith. "The Old English Offa Saga." Modern Philology 2.1

(1904): 29-76.

Roehrich, Lutz, ed. Spaetmittelalter zwischen Schriftlichkeit und Muendlichkeit. Stuttgart: Alfred Kroener, 1987.

Roellecke, Heinz, ed. Kinder-und Hausmaerchen, gesammelt durch die Brueder Grimm. Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1986.

Rose, Mary Beth, ed. Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives. Syracuse: Cornell UP, 1986.

Roussel, Claude. Conter de geste au XIVE siècle: inspiration folklorique et écriture épique dans La Belle Hélène de Constantinople. Geneva: Droz, 1998.

Rubin, Gayle. "Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy of Sex'." Toward an Anthology of Women. Ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. 175-210.

Rubin, Miri. "The Body, Whole and Vulnerable, in Fifteenth-Century England." In Hanawalt and Wallace 19-28.

Ruths, Rudolf. Die Franzoesischen Fassungen des Roman de la Belle Helene. Greifswald: Kuniike, 1897.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. 1978. Repr. New York: Routledge, 1979.

Sautman, Francesca. "Une femme à la mer: articulation d'un thème méconnu." CERMEIL 1.2 (1984): 21-33.

Sautman, Francesca Canadé, Diana Conclado, and Guiseppe Carlo di Scipio. Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition. New York: St. Martin's P, 1998.

Scarry, Elaine. The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the

World. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.

- Scheunemann, E. "Mai und Beafloer" und Hans von Buehel's "Koenigstochter von Frankreich," eine vergleichende Untersuchung zur Darstellung im Hohen und Spaeten Mittelalter. Breslau, [Wroclaw]: Maruschke und Berendt Verlag, 1934.
- Schick, J. "Die Urquelle der *Offa-Konstanze-Saga*." Britannica. Festschrift fuer Max Foerster zum 60. Geburtstag. Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1929. 31-56.
- Schlauch, Margaret. Chaucer and Accused Queens. 1927. New ed. New York: Gordion, 1969.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- Sheingorn, Pamela, ed. and trans. The Book of Sainte Foy. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1983.
- Shibanoff, Susan. "Mohammed, Courtly Love, and the Myth of Western Heterosexuality." MFN 16 (Fall 1993): 27-32.
- . "Worlds Apart: Orientalism, Antifeminism, and Heresy in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*." Exemplaria 8.1 (1996): 59-96.
- Shoaf, R. A. "Unwemmed Custance": Circulation, Property, and Incest in the *Man of Law's Tale*." Exemplaria 2.1 (1990): 287-302.
- Showalter, Elaine, ed. The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, Theory. New York: Pantheon, 1985.
- Southern, R. W. The Making of the Middle Ages. 1953. Repr. New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.

- . Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages. 1970.
Repr. London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Spiegel, Gabrielle M. "The Cult of St. Denis and Capetian Kingship." In Wilson 141-68.
- Staley, Lynn. "Gower, Richard II, Henry of Derby, and the Business of Making Culture." Speculum 75.1 (2000): 68-96.
- Stallybrass, Peter. "Boundary and Transgression in Medieval Culture." Stanford French Review 14.1-2 (1990): 9-23.
- . "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed." Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe. Ed. M. Ferguson et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 123-42.
- Stallybrass, Peter and Allen White, eds. The Politics and Poetics of Transgression. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.
- Stancliffe, Claire. St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983.
- Stefanovic, Svetislav. "Die Crescentia-Florence-Sage: Eine kritische Untersuchung ueber ihren Ursprung und ihre Entwicklung." Anglia 35 (1912): 483-525.
- Steinberg, Leo. The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion. 1983. New York: Pantheon, 1996.
- Suard, Francois. "Chanson de geste et roman devant le matériau folklorique: le Conte de la *Fille aux Mains Coupées* dans la *Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, *Lion de Bourges* et *La Manekine*." Mittelalterbilder aus Neuer Perspektive. Ed. E. Ruhe und R. Behrens. Muenchen: Wilhelm Fink, 1985. 364-77.

- . Chanson de geste et tradition épique en France au Moyen Age.
Caen: Paradigme, 1994.
- Summit, Jennifer. "Topography as Historiography: Petrarch, Chaucer, and the Making of Medieval Rome." JMEMS 30.2 (2000): 211-46.
- Uther, Hans-Joerg, crit. ed. Brueder Grimm: Kinder- und Hausmaerchen, nach der grossen Ausgabe von 1857. Munich: Eugen Diederich, 1996.
- . Interview Der Spiegel 23 (1993): 224.
- Thompson, Stith. Motif-Index of Folk-Literature. 6 vols. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955-58.
- Tibbets-Schulenberg, Jane. "The Hermeneutics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation." In Rose 29-72.
- Travis, Peter. "The Semiotics of Christ's Body in the English Mystery Cycles." Approaches to Teaching Medieval Drama. Ed. R. K. Emmerson. New York: MLA, 1960. 67-78.
- Turner, Victor and Edith Turner. Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. New York: Columbia UP, 1978.
- Van den Gheyn, J. L'Ystoire de Helayne: reproduction des 26 miniatures du manuscrit 9667 [sic] de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Brussels: Vromant, 1913.
- Van Gennepe, Arnold. Religion, mœurs et légendes. Paris: Société de Mercure de France, 1905.
- Vauchez, André. "Lay People's Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Century)." In Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Szell 21-32.

- Vaughan, Richard. Matthew Paris. 1958. New ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1979.
- Verhuyck, Paul. "Les Manuscrits du poème de 'La Belle Hélène de Constantinople'." Studi Francesi 47 (1972): 314-24.
- Wallenskoeld, A. "Le Conte de la femme chaste convoitée par son beau-frère: étude de la littérature comparée." Helsinki: Société de littérature finnoise, 1907.
- . "L'Origine et l'évolution du conte de la femme chaste convoitée de son beau-frère (Légende de Crescentia)." Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 14 (1912).
- Walter, Philippe. Canicule: essai de mythologie sur Yvain de Chrétien de Troyes. Paris: SEDES, 1988.
- . Le Gant de Verre: le mythe de Tristan et Yseut. La Gacilly: Editions Artus, 1990.
- . Mythologie Chrétienne: rites et mythes au Moyen Age. Paris: Editions Entente, 1992.
- Warner, Marina. Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Random, 1976.
- Weever, Jaqueline de. Daughters of Sheba: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic. New York: Garland, 1998.
- Wetherbee, Winthrop. "Constance and the World in Chaucer and Gower." John Gower: Recent Readings. Ed. R. F. Yeager. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989. 65-93.
- . "Nicolette's Blackness-Lost in Translation." Romance Notes 36.3 (1994): 317-25.

- Westrem, Scott D., ed. Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination. New York: Garland, 1991.
- . "Medieval Western European Views of Sexuality Reflected in the Narratives of Travelers to the Orient." Homo Carnalis, Acta 14 (1987): 141-56.
- Whigham, F. "Incest and Ideology: The *Duchess of Malfi*." Kastan and Stallybrass. 263-74.
- Wilson, Katharina and Elizabeth Makowski. Wykked Wyves and the Woe of Marriage: Misogamous Literature from Juvenal to Chaucer. Albany: State U of New York P, 1990.
- Wilson, Stephen, ed. Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History. Cambridge UK: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- Winstead, Karen A. Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997.
- Wogan-Browne, Jocelyn. "Saints' Lives and the Female Reader." Forum for Modern Language Studies 27.4 (1991): 314-32.
- The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux. Trans. Kilian Walsh. Cistercian Fathers Series 7. Vol. 3. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1976.
- Yaeger, R. F., ed. John Gower: Recent Readings. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan UP, 1989.